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LETTERS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

G. BIRKBECK HILL

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LETTERS
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

COLLECTED AND EDITED

By GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL, D.C.L.

PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD

EDITOR OF BOSWELL'S 'LIFE OF JOHNSON'

IN TWO VOLUMES: VOL. II

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LETTERS OF DR. JOHNSON.

506.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

Wednesday, Jan. 15, One in the morning, 1777.

*Omnium rerum vicissitudo*². The night after last Thursday was so bad, that I took ipecacuanha the next day. The next night was no better. On Saturday I dined with Sir Joshua. The night was such as I was forced to rise and pass some hours in a chair, with great labour of respiration. I found it now time to do something, and went to Dr. Lawrence³, and told him I would do what he should order, without reading the prescription. He sent for a chirurgeon⁴ and took about twelve ounces of blood, and in the afternoon I got sleep in a chair.

At night, when I came to lie down after trial of an hour or two, I found sleep impracticable, and therefore did what the Doctor permitted in a case of distress; I rose, and opening the orifice, let out about ten ounces more. Frank and I were but awkward; but, with Mr. Levet's help⁵, we stopped the stream,

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 343.

² 'Omnium rerum heus vicissitudo est.'

TERENCE. *Eunuchus*, ii. 2. 45.

For 'the sad vicissitude of things,' see *Life*, v. 117.

³ *Ante*, i. 47, n. 2.

⁴ Johnson in his Dictionary under *Chirurgeon*, says 'it is now generally pronounced, and by many written,

surgeon.' Under *Surgeon* he writes 'corrupted by conversation from *chirurgurgeon*.' Dr. Murray in his *Dictionary* gives no later instance in prose of this spelling than one found in one of Johnson's Letters.

⁵ Levett, 'the obscure practiser in physic,' had a room in his house. 'I have heard Johnson say,' writes Boswell, 'he should not be satisfied,

and I lay down again, though to little purpose ; the difficulty of breathing allowed no rest. I slept again in the day-time, in an erect posture. The Doctor has ordered a second bleeding, which I hope will set my breath at liberty¹. Last night I could lie but a little at a time.

Yet I do not make it a matter of much form. I was to-day at Mrs. Gardiner's². When I have bled to-morrow, I will not give up Langton, nor Paradise³. But I beg that you will fetch me away on Friday. I do not know but clearer air may do me good ; but whether the air be clear or dark, let me come to you.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

To sleep, or not to sleep——⁴

507.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], February 18, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 104.

508.

TO GEORGE STEEVENS.

[London], February 25, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 100.

509.

TO MRS. ASTON⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

Bolt-Court, March 8, 1777.

As we pass on through the journey of life, we meet, and ought to expect, many unpleasing occurrences, but many likewise encounter us unexpected. I have this morning heard from Lucy⁶ of your illness. I heard, indeed, in the next sentence

though attended by all the College of Physicians, unless he had Mr. Levet with him.' *Life*, i. 243.

¹ Johnson wrote to Boswell on February 18:—'I have been so distressed by difficulty of breathing that I lost, as was computed, six and thirty ounces of blood in a few days.' *Ib.* iii. 104. See *ib.* iii. 152, *n.* 3, for his resort to bleeding.

² 'The wife of a tallow chandler on Snow Hill, not in the learned way, but a worthy good woman.' *Ib.* i. 242.

³ *Ante*, i. 314.

⁴ He is parodying *Hamlet*, Act iii. sc. 1, l. 56:—'To be, or not to be.'

⁵ Published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 528.

⁶ Miss Porter, Mrs. Aston's near neighbour at Lichfield.

that

that you are to a great degree recovered. May your recovery, dearest Madam, be complete and lasting ! The hopes of paying you the annual visit is one of the few solaces with which my imagination gratifies me ; and my wish is, that I may find you happy.

My health is much broken ; my nights are very restless, and will not be made more comfortable by remembering that one of the friends whom I value most is suffering equally with myself. Be pleased, dearest lady, to let me know how you are ; and if writing be troublesome, get dear Mrs. Gastrell¹ to write for you. I hope she is well and able to assist you ; and wish that you may so well recover, as to repay her kindness, if she should want you. May you both live long happy together !

I am,

Dear Madam, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

510.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], March 11, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 105.

511.

TO MRS. ASTON².

DEAREST MADAM,

The letter with which I was favoured [by] the kindness of Mrs. Gastrel has contributed very little to quiet my solicitude. I am indeed more frightened than by Mrs. Porter's account. Yet since you have had strength to conquer your disorder so as to obtain a partial recovery, I think it reasonable to believe that the favourable season which is now coming forward, may restore you to your former health. Do not, dear Madam, lose your courage, nor by despondence or inactivity give way to the disease. Use such exercise as you can bear, and excite cheerful thoughts in your own mind. Do not harrass [*sic*] your faculties

¹ Mrs. Aston's sister. *Ante*, i. 160, *well*, page 529. Corrected by me
n. 4. from the original in Pembroke

² First published in Croker's *Bos-* College Library.

with laborious attention, nothing is, in my opinion, of more mischievous tendency in a state of body like yours, than deep meditation, or perplexing solitude. Gayety is a duty when health requires it¹. Entertain yourself as you can with small amusements or light conversation, and let nothing but your devotion ever make you serious. But while I exhort you, my dearest lady, to merriment, I am very serious myself. The loss or danger of a friend is not to be considered with indifference; but I derive some consolation from the thought, that you do not languish unattended, that you are not in the hands of strangers or servants, but have a Sister at hand to watch your wants and supply them. If at this distance I can be of any use by consulting Physicians or for any other purpose I hope you will employ me.

I have thought on a journey to Staffordshire, and hope in a few weeks to climb Stowhill², and to find there the pleasure which I have so often found. Let me hear again from you.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

March 15, 1777.

512.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

MADAM,

March 19, 1777.

Be pleased to procure the bearer credit for a linen gown, and let her bring the bill to me.

Did you stay all night at Sir Joshua's? and keep Miss up again? Miss Owen had a sight—all the Burkes—the Harris's—

¹ This was a lesson which he often taught: 'Grief has its time' he said. *Life*, iv. 121. 'Grief is a species of idleness,' he wrote to Mrs. Thrale. *Ante*, i. 212. 'Encourage yourself in bustle, and variety, and cheerfulness,' he wrote to her ten weeks after the death of her only surviving son. *Ante*, i. 406. 'Even to think in the most reasonable manner,' he said at another time, 'is for the present not

so useful as not to think.' *Ante*, i. 293. When Mr. Thrale died, he wrote to his widow:—'I think business the best remedy for grief, as soon as it can be admitted.' *Post*, Letter of April 11, 1781. To Dr. Taylor he wrote:—'Sadness only multiplies self.' *Post*, Letter of August 3, 1779.

² Her house was on Stow Hill.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 345.

Miss

Miss Reynolds—what has she to see more? and Mrs. Horneck, and Miss¹.

You are all young, and gay, and easy; but I have miserable nights, and know not how to make them better; but I shift pretty well a-days, and so have at you all at Dr. Burney's to-morrow².

I never thought of meeting you at Sir Joshua's, nor knew that it was a great day. But things, as sages have observed, happen unexpectedly; and you thought little of seeing me this fortnight except to-morrow. But go where you will, and see if I do not catch you. When I am away, every body runs away with you, and carries you among the grisettes, or whither they will. I hope you will find the want of me twenty times before you see me.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ 'Miss' who was kept up again was Miss Thrale. Miss Burney describes her at this time as just 'verging on her teens. She is certainly handsome, and her beauty is of a peculiar sort; fair, round, firm, and cherubimical; with its chief charm exactly where lies the mother's failure—namely in the mouth. She is reckoned cold and proud; but I believe her to be merely shy and reserved. She was very silent, but very observant; and never looked tired though she never uttered a syllable.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 88. See also *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 153. 'Miss Owen, who is a relation of Mrs. Thrale's, is good-humoured and sensible enough. She is a sort of butt, and as such is a general favourite; though she is a willing, and not a mean butt; for she is a woman of family and fortune.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 88.

'All the Burkes' would be Edmund Burke and his wife, his brother Richard, and his friend and distant relative William Burke, both of whom

together with Edmund are described in Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

Harris was 'Hermes' Harris. *Life*, ii. 225, and *post*, Letter of April 25, 1780. His wife, Miss Burney describes as 'in nothing extraordinary; a so, so, sort of woman.' *Early Diary*, &c., ii. 57. The editor in a note protests against this judgment, appealing to the merits of her published letters.

For the Hornecks see *Life*, i. 414, and *ante*, i. 221, *n.* 3.

² Miss Burney, on January 9, 1788, in the days of her servitude at Court, records that the first volume of Johnson's *Letters to Mrs. Thrale*, as yet unpublished, was lent to her. 'The book belongs to the Bishop of Carlisle [Dr. Douglas], who lent it to Mr. Turbulent [a gentleman who read to the Queen], from whom it was again lent to the Queen, and so passed on to Mrs. Schwellenberg. Our name once occurs; how I started at its sight! 'Tis to mention the party that planned the first visit to our house: Miss Owen, Mr. Seward,

To

513.

TO HENRY THRALE¹.

DEAR SIR,

April 9, 1777.

This is a letter of pure congratulation. I congratulate you,

1. That you are alive².
2. That you have got my mistress fixed again after her eccentricities.
3. That my mistress has added to her conquests the Prince of Castiglione³.

Mrs. and Miss Thrale, and Dr. Johnson. How well shall we ever, my Susan, remember that morning! The next day she records:—'Mrs. Schwellenberg told me that in the second volume I also was mentioned. It has given me a sickness at heart inexpressible. It is not that I expect severity; for previous to the marriage with Piozzi, if Mrs. Thrale loved not F. B. where shall we find faith in words? But her present resentment of my constant disapprobation of her conduct may prompt some note, or other mark, to point out her change of sentiments.' The Queen said to Miss Burney:—'I said to Mr. Langton at the Drawing-room:—"Your friend, Dr. Johnson, Sir, has had many friends busy to publish his books, and his memoirs, and his meditations, and his thoughts; but I think he wanted one friend more." "What for? Ma'am," cried he. "A friend to suppress them," I answered.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Memoirs*, iv. 15, 19, 22.

Miss Burney in a letter written at the time describes the party at her father's:—'Mrs. Thrale is a very pretty woman still; she is extremely lively and chatty; has no supercilious or pedantic airs, and is really gay and agreeable.' *Early Diary*, &c., ii. 153. This letter she published fifty-five years later in an altered

form. In it she says:—'I liked her in every thing except her entrance into the room, which was rather florid and flourishing, as who should say, "It's I!—No less a person than Mrs. Thrale."' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 88.

In the original letter she gives a long and curious description of Johnson. 'He is indeed very ill-favoured; is tall and stout, but stoops terribly; he is almost bent double.' He had on his best clothes, 'being engaged to dine in a large company; a large wig, snuff-colour coat and gold buttons, but no ruffles to his [shirt]; doughty fists, and black worsted stockings.' There is an erasure in the original; the editor suspects that 'doughty fists' was originally 'dirty fists.' *Early Diary*, &c., ii. 154.

According to Wraxall (*Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 138), 'the total abolition of buckles and ruffles' was not made 'till the era of Jacobinism and of Equality in 1793 and 1794.' Sir P. J. Clerk, though a strong Whig, wore 'very rich laced ruffles' as late as 1781. *Life*, iv. 80.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 346.

² 'His death had appeared in the newspapers.' *Life*, iii. 107.

³ 'Prince Gonzaga di Castiglione, when dining in company with Dr. Johnson, thinking it was a polite as

4. That

4. That you will not be troubled with me till to-morrow, when I shall come with * * * *.

5. That * * * * will go away in the evening.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

514.

TO JOHN RYLAND¹.

SIR,

I have sent you the papers. Of this parcel I have rejected [? ejected] no poetry². Of the letters there are some which I should be sorry to omit, some that it is not proper to insert, and very many which as we want room or want matter we may use or neglect. When we come to these we will have another selection. But to these I think the present plan of publication will never bring me. His poems with his play will I think make two volumes, The Adventurers will make at least one, and for the fourth, as I think you intend four, which will make the subscription a guinea, if you subscribe, we have so much more than we want that the difficulty will be to reject.

If Mrs. Hawkesworth sells the copy³, we are then to consider how many volumes she sells, and if they are fewer than we have matter to fill, we will be the more rigorous in our choice.

I am for letting none stand that are only relatively good, as they were written in youth. The Buyer has no better bargain

well as gay thing to drink the Doctor's health with some proof that he had read his works, called out from the top of the table to the bottom,—At your good health, *Mr. Vagabond*.¹ Piozzi's *Synonymy*, ii. 358.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison of Fonthill House.

It was sold by Messrs. Sotheby & Co., on May 10, 1875, for £6 15s. (Lot 95), and by Messrs. Christie & Co., on June 5, 1888 (Lot 36), for £10.

For the subject of this Letter see *ante*, i. 412-3.

² Had Hawkesworth's Poems been published perhaps there would be found included among them some poor pieces of verse assigned to Johnson, but I am convinced, wrongly assigned. *Life*, i. 177-8. Hawkesworth wrote, it is stated, the pieces in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1746-8 signed GREVILLE. See *ib.*, 1779, p. 72, (where wrong references are given). This may be a mistake. See *ante*, i. p. 60, n. 2, for Hawkesworth's friendship with Fulke Greville.

³ The copyright.

when

when he pays for mean performances, by being told that the authour wrote them young¹.

If the Lady can get an hundred pounds a volume, I should advise her to take it. She may ask more. I am not willing to take less.

If she prints them by subscription the volumes should be four, if, at her own expense, I still do not see considering the great quantity of our matter how they can be fewer. But in that I shall not be obstinate.

I have yet not mentioned Swift's Life², nor the Novel³ which together will go far towards a volume.

Who was his Amanuensis? that small hand strikes a reader with terrour. It is pale as well as small⁴.

Many little things are, I believe, in the magazine⁵, which should be marked and considered. I do not always know them but by conjecture.

The poetry I would have printed in order of time, which he seems to have intended by noting the dates, which dates I should like to preserve, they shew the progress of [word torn off] mind, and of a very powerful mind⁶. The same [word torn off] may be generally observed in the prose pieces.

What we have to consider, and what I have considered, are the Authour's credit, and the Lady's advantages.

I should be glad to take over the whole, when you can spend an hour or two with, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

April 12, 1777.

To Mr. Ryland.

¹ 'For his early pieces Milton seems to have had a degree of fondness not very laudable; what he has once written he resolves to preserve, and gives to the public an unfinished poem [The Passion], which he broke off because he was "nothing satisfied with what he had done," supposing his readers less nice than himself.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 118.

² Johnson begins his own *Life of*

Swift by praising Hawkesworth's.

³ *Almorana and Hamet; an Oriental Tale*. By John Hawkesworth, LL.D. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1761, p. 273.

⁴ Hawkesworth twenty years earlier had attacked Johnson's 'pot-hooks.' *Ante*, i. 60, n. 2.

⁵ The *Gentleman's Magazine*.

⁶ Hawkesworth was 'Johnson's closest imitator; though,' adds Boswell, 'when he had become elated

515.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

May 3, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 108.

516.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

The weather now begins to grow tempting, and brings my annual excursion² into my mind. It is now an interesting question whether you intend to come hither again, for if you do, I shall endeavour to accompany you back: if you let idleness prevail, and stay at home, I have my own course to take.

Mr. Lucas has just been with me. He has compelled me to read his tragedy, which is but a poor performance, and yet may perhaps put money into his pocket; it contains nothing immoral or indecent, and therefore, we may very reasonably wish it success³.

My nights continue to be very flatulent, and restless, and my days are therefore sluggish and drowsy. After physick I have sometimes less uneasiness, as I had last night, but the effect is by no means constant; nor have I found any advantage from going to bed either with a full or an empty stomach.

Let me know what you resolve about your journey, as soon as you have taken your resolution.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

May 3, 1777.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

by having risen into some degree of consequence, he, in a conversation with me, had the provoking effrontery to say he was not sensible of it.' *Life*, i. 234, 252.

¹ From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson and Co., of 5 Pall Mall Place, S.W.

² His annual excursion was to Lichfield and Ashbourne. In the thirteen

years 1767-1779 (inclusive) he only failed thrice to visit these places. He often stayed at Oxford and Birmingham on his way. *Life*, iii. 452.

³ This paragraph is scored out in the original. In Baker's *Biog. Dram.*, ed. 1782, i. 289, Henry Lucas is described as a student at the Middle Temple, and son of the
TO

517.

TO CHALLES O'CONNOR.

[London], May 19, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 111.

518.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

May 19, 1777.

I have written to Dr. Taylor, you may be sure, but the business is pretty much out of the Doctor's way. His acquaintance [*is* or *lies*] with the Lord Cavendishes, he barely knows the young Duke and Duchess². He will be proud to shew that he can do it; but he will hardly try, if he suspects any danger of refusal.

You will become such a gadder, that you will not care a penny for me. However, you are wise in wishing to know what life is made of; to try what are the pleasures which are so eagerly sought, and so dearly purchased. We must know pleasure before we can rationally despise it. And it is not desirable that when you are, with maternal authority, talking down juvenile hopes and maiden passions, your hearers should tell you, like Miss P——, 'You never saw a *fête*.'

That you may see this show I have written, because I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

519.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR³.

DEAR SIR,

I am required by Mrs. Thrale to solicit you to exert your

celebrated Irish patriot, Dr. Lucas. [*Life*, i. 311.] He is the author of one play, printed in a volume of miscellanies. It is entitled *The Earl of Somerset*, 1780.² He was perhaps the dramatic writer of whom Johnson said:—'I never did the man an injury; but he would persist in reading his tragedy to me.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1791, p. 500.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 347.

This letter is explained by the one that follows.

² William, fifth Duke of Devonshire, born 1748; succeeded, 1764; married 1774, Georgiana, daughter of Earl Spencer. The Lord Cavendishes were the Duke's uncles.³ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S., v. 423.

interest,

interest, that she may have a ticket of admission to the entertainment at Devonshire house¹. Do for her what you can.

I continue to have very troublesome and tedious nights, which I do not perceive any change of place to make better or worse. This is indeed at present my chief malady, but this is very heavy.

My thoughts were to have been in Staffordshire before now. But who does what he designs? My purpose is still to spend part of the Summer amongst you; and of that hope I have no particular reason to fear the disappointment.

Poor Dod was sentenced last week. It is a thing almost without example for a Clergyman of his rank to stand at the bar for a capital breach of morality. I am afraid he will suffer. The clergy seem not to be his friends. The populace that was extremely clamorous against him, begins to pity him. The time that was gained by an objection which was never considered as having any force, was of great use, as it allowed the publick resentment to cool². To spare his life, and his life is all that ought to be spared, would be now rather popular than offensive. How little he thought six months ago of being what he now is.

I am, Sir, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

May 19, 1777.

520.

TO THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JENKINSON.

[London, June 20, 1777]. Published in the *Life*, iii. 145.

¹ There is a print of Devonshire House in Piccadilly as it was in 1761, in Dodsley's *London and its Environs*, ii. 225.

² Dr. Dodd, on February 22, had been found guilty of forging a bond for £4200 in the name of the young Earl of Chesterfield, and had been sentenced to death. On April 18, eleven of the twelve Judges (the Lord Chief Justice being absent) decided that the evidence of one of the witnesses, against which exception had

been taken, was competent. On June 27, Dodd was hanged at Tyburn. *Annual Register*, 1777, i. 168, 177, 187, 232. Horace Walpole wrote two days after his execution:— 'Are you not glad, Madam, there is an end of talking of poor Dr. Dodd? I felt excessively for him, without a good opinion, for between the law and his friends he suffered a thousand deaths.' *Letters*, vi. 449. See *Life*, iii. 119-122, 139-148.

521.

TO THE REVEREND DR. DODD.

[London, June 22, 1777]. Published in the *Life*, iii. 145.

522.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], June 24, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 124.

523.

TO THE REVEREND DR. DODD.

[London], June 26, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 147.

524.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], June 28, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 120.

525.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London], June 29, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 124.

526.

TO W. SHARP, JUNIOR.

Bolt-court, July 7, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 126, where it is wrongly stated to be addressed to Edward Dilly.

527.

TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE¹.[London], July 9, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 125.

528.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], July 22, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 127.

529.

TO MRS. BOSWELL.

[London], July 22, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 129.

TO

530.

TO THE REVEREND DR. FARMER ¹.

SIR,

The booksellers of London have undertaken a kind of body of English poetry, excluding generally the dramas, and I have undertaken to put before each authour's works a sketch of his life, and a character of his writings. Of some, however, I know very little, and am afraid I shall not easily supply my deficiencies. Be pleased to inform me whether among Mr. Baker's² manuscripts, or anywhere else at Cambridge, any materials are to be found. If any such collection can be gleaned, I doubt not of your willingness to direct *our* search, and will tell the booksellers to employ a transcriber. If you think my inspection necessary, I will come down; for who that has once experienced the civilities of Cambridge would not snatch the opportunity of another visit³?

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, July 22, 1777.

To Dr. Farmer, Emanuel Coll., Cambridge.

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1835, part i. page 47.

Johnson recorded in his Diary this year: 'March 29, Easter Eve. I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 155. On April 24, Boswell wrote to ask 'about this edition of "*The English Poets*, with a Preface, biographical and critical, to each Authour, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D.'" which I see advertised.' *Life*, iii. 108.

² Thomas Baker (1656-1740), a non-juror, who on the accession of George I was deprived of his fellowship at St. John's College, Cambridge, for refusing to take the abjuration-oath. Horace Walpole,

writing two months after the date of Johnson's letter, and offering to write the non-juror's *Life*, says:—'When martyrs are as sensible as Mr. Baker, I doubt my own understanding more than his. I know I have not his virtues, but should delight in doing justice to them.' *Letters*, vi. 488. Baker had collected a great mass of materials for a work which should do for Cambridge what Anthony Wood had done for Oxford. They fill forty-two folio volumes. 'An index to the whole series was published in 1848, and a "Catalogue" of the contents of the Cambridge volumes in 1867.' *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, iii. 18.

³ Johnson had paid a short visit to Cambridge in 1765, when he was promised, he said, 'an habitation in

TO

531.

TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE¹.

July 22, 1777.

If any notice should be taken of the recommendation which I took the liberty of sending you, it will be necessary to know that Mr. De Groot is to be found at No. 8, in Pye-street, Westminster. This information, when I wrote, I could not give you; and being going soon to Lichfield, think it necessary to be left behind me. More I will not say. You will want no persuasion to succour the nephew of Grotius.

I am, Sir, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

532.

TO HENRY THRALE².

DEAR SIR,

[Oxford], July 31, 1777.

I came hither on Monday, and find every thing much as I expected. I shall not stay long, but if you send any letters to me on Saturday, to University College, I shall receive them. Please to make my compliments to mistress and Queeney. I have

Emanuel College,' of which Dr. Farmer was Master. *Life*, i. 487, 517. He did not, I believe, visit the University a second time. See *Life*, iii. 427, for another Letter asking Farmer for information about Ambrose Philips, Broome and Gray.

¹ First published in Malone's edition of *Boswell*.

Dr. Vyse was Rector of Lambeth (see *ante*, i. 148, *n.* 3, for his father). Johnson on July 9 had 'requested his assistance in recommending an old friend to the Archbishop, as Governor of the Charter-house. His name is De Groot; he was born at Gloucester; I have known him many years. He has all the common claims to charity, being old, poor, and infirm, in a great degree. He has likewise another claim, to which no scholar

can refuse attention; he is by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him, from whom perhaps every man of learning has learnt something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused.' The application was successful. *Life*, iii. 125. 'In the Charter-house are maintained eighty pensioners, who, according to the institution, are gentlemen, merchants, or soldiers, who are fallen into misfortunes. These are provided with handsome apartments, and all the necessities of life except clothes; instead of which each of them is allowed a gown and £7 *per annum*.' Dodsley's *Environs of London*, ii. 98.

² *Piozzi Letters*, i. 348.

Johnson had arrived at Oxford on Monday, July 28.

picked

picked up some little information for my Lives at the library. I know not whether I shall go forward without some regret. I cannot break my promise to Boswell and the rest¹; but I have a good mind to come back again.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

533.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

[Oxford], August 4, 1777.

I did not mean to express much discontent nor any ill-humour in my letter. When I went away I knew that I went partly because I had talked of going, and because I was a little restless. I have been searching the library for materials for my Lives, and a little I have got.

Things have not gone quite well with poor Gwynne. His work was finished so ill that he has been condemned to pay three hundred pounds for damages, and the sentence is considered as very mild. He has however not lost his friends, and is still in the best houses, and at the best tables³.

I shall enquire about the harvest when I come into a region

¹ He had written to Boswell on May 3:—'My health is very bad, and my nights are very unquiet. What can I do to mend them? I have for this summer nothing better in prospect than a journey into Staffordshire and Derbyshire, perhaps with Oxford and Birmingham in my way.' *Life*, iii. 109. Boswell proposed that they should meet at Carlisle, a city which Johnson wished to see (*ib.* p. 118); but Johnson was loath to go so far north (*ib.* p. 123). On July 22 he wrote:—'I shall go to Ashbourne, and propose to make Dr. Taylor invite you' (*ib.* p. 127).

² *Piozzi Letters*, i. 349.

³ I have searched in vain in the records of the City of Oxford for an account of this sentence. I had hoped in the set of *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in the Bodleian to find a report

of the action at law in which Gwynn was condemned, but the number is missing in which in all likelihood a report was given of the Summer Assize. In 1771 John Gwynn was appointed Surveyor to the new Board of Commissioners of the Oxford Paving Act, at a salary of £150 a year. He directed the demolition of the old gates, &c. The new Magdalen Bridge was designed by him, the Market and the Workhouse. Owen, in John Chambers's *Biographical Illustrations of Worcester-shire*, ed. 1820, p. 504, described him from personal recollection as 'lively, quick and sarcastic, of quaint appearance and odd manners.' He built moreover bridges at Worcester and Shrewsbury. See *post*, Letter of January 30, 1778.

where

where any thing necessary to life is understood¹. I do not believe that there is yet any great harm, if the weather should now mend. Reaping time will only be a little later than is usual.

Dr. Wetherell is abroad, I think at London; Mr. Coulson is here, and well². Every body that knows you, enquires after you.

Boswell's project is disconcerted, by a visit from a relation of Yorkshire, whom he mentions as the head of his clan³. Boszy, you know, makes a huge bustle about all his own motions, and all mine. I have inclosed a letter to pacify him, and reconcile him to the uncertainties of human life.

I believe it was after I left your house, that I received a pot of orange marmalade from Mrs. Boswell. We have now, I hope, made it up. I have not opened my pot⁴.

I have determined to leave Oxford to-morrow⁵, and on Thursday hope to see Lichfield, where I mean to rest till Dr. Taylor fetches me to Ashbourne, and there I am likely enough to stay till you bid me come back to London.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

534.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Oxford, August 4, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 130.

¹ Johnson in a letter to the Master of University College speaks of 'our scholastick ignorance of mankind.' *Life*, ii. 425. It had been complained of before his time, as is shown by the following passage in *The Guardian*, No. X, March 23, 1712-13:—'I am very glad to hear, being myself a Fellow of Lincoln College, that there is at last in one of our Universities arisen a happy genius for little things. It is extremely to be lamented, that hitherto we come from the college as unable to put on our own clothes as we do from nurse.'

² For Dr. Wetherell and Mr.

Coulson see *ante*, i. 313, 323.

³ Squire Godfrey Bosville, of Gunthwait, 'my Yorkshire chief,' as Boswell calls him. *Life*, ii. 169; iii. 439. For Johnson's pacifying letter see *ib.* iii. 130.

⁴ Johnson's acknowledgment of the pot does not seem strictly accurate. He wrote to Mrs. Boswell on July 22: 'Though I am well enough pleased with the taste of sweetmeats, very little of the pleasure which I received at the arrival of your jar of marmalade arose from eating it.' *ib.* iii. 129.

⁵ Tuesday, August 5.

TO

535.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, August 7, 1777.

On Tuesday I left Oxford, and came to Birmingham. Mr. Hector is well ; Mrs. Careless² was not at home. Yesterday I came hither. Mrs. Porter is well. Mrs. Aston³, to whom I walked before I sat down, is very ill, but better. Whether she will recover I know not. If she dies I have a great loss. Mr. Green⁴ is well, and Mrs. Adey⁵, more I have not yet seen. At Birmingham I heard of the death of an old friend, and at Lichfield of the death of another⁶. *Anni prædantur euntes*⁷. One was a little older, the other a little younger than myself.

But amidst these privations the present must still be thought on, we must act as if we were to live. My barber, a man not unintelligent, speaks magnificently of the harvest ; and Frank, whom I ordered to make his observations, noted fields of very fine shew as we passed along.

Lucy thinks nothing of my prologue for Kelly, and says she has always disowned it⁸. I have not let her know my transactions with Dr. Dodd⁹. She says, she takes Miss's correspondence very kindly.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 351.² Hector's sister. *Ante*, i. 164.³ *Ante*, ii. 3.⁴ *Ante*, i. 161.⁵ *Ante*, i. 331.⁶ *Post*, p. 20.⁷ 'Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes.'HORACE. 2 *Epis.* ii. 55.

'Years following years steal something every day.'

POPE. *Imitations*, l. 72.⁸ 'He wrote a Prologue which was spoken before *A Word to the Wise*, a comedy by Mr. Hugh Kelly which had been brought upon the stage in 1770 ; but Kelly being a writer for

ministry, in one of the newspapers, it fell a sacrifice to popular fury, and in the playhouse phrase, was *dammed*. By the generosity of Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent Garden theatre, it was now exhibited for one night, for the benefit of the author's widow and children.' *Life*, iii. 113. 'Lucy' is his step-daughter, Miss, or as she was now called, Mrs. Porter.

⁹ Johnson wrote petitions and letters for Dodd, as well as his speech when sentence of death was about to be pronounced, and *The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren*. *Ib.* iii. 121, 141. In the British Museum (Add. MSS. 24419), in a

536.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, August 9, 1777.

No great matter has happened since I wrote, but this place grows more and more barren of entertainment. Two whom I hoped to have seen are dead. I think that I am much more unwieldy and inert than when I was here last; my nights are very tedious. But a light heart, &c.²

Lucy said, 'When I read Dr. Dodd's sermon to the prisoners I said, Dr. Johnson could not make a better.'

One of Lucy's maids is dreadfully tormented by the tænia, or long-worm. She has taken many medicines without effect, and

Letter dated Rectory, Great Warley, Essex, December 18, 1834, from Hastings Robinson, B.D., Late Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, Cambridge, to John Murray of Albemarle Street, is the following anecdote 'communicated to me many years since,' says the writer, 'by one of the party, and taken down in writing at the time':—'Miss Seward, her father, the Rev. R. G. Robinson of Lichfield, and Dr. Johnson were passing the day at the Palace at Lichfield, of which Mr. Seward was the occupier. The conversation turned upon Dr. Dodd, who had been recently executed. It proceeded as follows:—

'MISS SEWARD.—"I think, Dr. Johnson, you applied to Mr. Jenkinson in his behalf."

'DR. JOHNSON.—"Why yes, Madam. I knew it was a man having no interest writing to a man who had no interest; but I thought with myself, when Dr. Dodd comes to the place of execution he may say, 'Had Dr. Johnson written in my behalf, I had not been here,' and (with great emphasis) I could not bear the thought."

'MISS SEWARD.—"But, Dr. Johnson, would you have pardoned Dr. Dodd?"

'DR. JOHNSON.—"Madam, had I been placed at the head of the legislature, I should certainly have signed his death-warrant; though no law either human or divine forbids our deprecating punishment either for ourselves or others."

Johnson's letter to Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool) is in the *Life*, iii. 145. It is most improbable that he spoke of him as 'a man who had no interest.' He was at this time Secretary at War, and justly suspected for his private influence with the King. Burke, on May 14 of this year, attacked him in the House 'as the real Minister.' *Parl. Hist.*, xix. 251.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 352.

² 'Had she been light, like you,
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,
She might ha' been a grandam ere she died;
And so may you; for a light heart lives long.'

Love's Labour's Lost, Act v. sc. 2.

it

it is much wished that she could have the Knightsbridge powder. I will pay for it, if you, dear Madam, will be so kind as to procure it, and send it with directions. Can it be franked¹? If it cannot, the best way will be to unite it with something of greater bulk. I have promised Lucy to give her Cook's last voyage, for she loves prints; but the last voyage cannot be well understood without some knowledge of the former. If you will lend us Hawkesworth's books, they shall be carefully returned². If you will do this for us, the powders may be easily put up with the books.

Please to make my compliments to Master³, and to Queeney.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

537.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, August 13, 1777.

Such tattle as filled your last sweet letter prevents one great inconvenience of absence, that of returning home a stranger and an enquirer. The variations of life consist of little things. Important innovations are soon heard, and easily understood. Men that meet to talk of physicks or metaphysicks, or law or history, may be immediately acquainted. We look at each other in silence, only for want of petty talk upon slight occurrences⁵. Continue therefore to write all that you would say.

¹ The weight of a packet franked by a Member of Parliament could not at this time exceed two ounces. It was afterwards reduced to one ounce. Official franks, before the abolition of the system, 'had been used to free a great coat, a bundle of baby-linen, and a piano-forte.' *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 188, n. 11.

² Cook's 'former voyage' was in the years 1768-1771. The account of it is in volume ii. of Hawkesworth's *Voyages in the Southern Hemisphere*, published in 1773 in 3 vols. His 'last voyage' was published in 1777,

under the title of *A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World in the years 1772-5*.

³ Mr. Thrale.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 354.

⁵ Johnson never for one moment felt as Wordsworth did about 'personal talk.' He would never have said:—

'Better than such discourse doth silence long,

Long, barren silence square with my desire.'

See *Life*, ii. 359, where he says:—

'That is the happiest conversation

You

You have Lord Westcote¹ and every body when I am away, and you go to Mr. Cator's², and you are so happy.

Miss Turton and Harry Jackson are dead³. Mrs. Aston is, I am afraid, in great danger. Mr. Green, Mr. Garrick⁴, and Mr. Newton⁵ are all well. I have been very faint and breathless since I came hither, but fancy myself better this day. I hope Master's walk will be finished when I come back, and I shall perambulate it very often.

There seems to be in this country scarcely any fruit, there never indeed was much⁶; but great things have been said of the harvest, and the only fear is of the weather. It rains here almost every day.

I dined yesterday with the corporation, and talked against a

where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments.' 'Those persons,' writes Burke, 'who creep into the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are never persons of shining qualities nor strong virtues.' *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. 1759, p. 206.

¹ Lord Westcote was the Mr. Lyttelton who invited Johnson to Hagley in 1771 (*ante*, i. 177), and whom he visited with the Thrales in 1774, when 'they were disappointed of the respect and kindness that they expected.' *Life*, v. 456. Baretti in a note on *Piozzi Letters*, i. 42, says that 'Johnson was never pleased a moment with Lord Westcote's conversation, which indeed is dull enough.'

² *Ante*, i. 355.

³ Miss Turton was, I suppose, the friend whose death Johnson heard of at Birmingham, and Harry Jackson the friend whose death he heard of at Lichfield. *Ante*, ii. 17. For Jackson see *ante*, i. 378.

⁴ Peter Garrick, the actor's eldest

brother. The two brothers for a short time had been partners in the wine trade in Durham Yard in the Strand. 'Peter was calm, sedate, and methodical; David was gay, volatile and impetuous.' Davies's *Life of Garrick*, i. 16. Boswell describes Peter Garrick as 'strongly resembling David in countenance and voice, but of more sedate and placid manners.' *Life*, ii. 311, 462.

⁵ The Thrales and Johnson had called on Mr. Newton in July, 1774. *Ib.* v. 428. He was perhaps related to Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, who was a Lichfield man. *Ib.* iv. 285.

⁶ 'BOSWELL.—"Is not a good garden a very common thing in England, Sir?" JOHNSON: "Not so common, Sir, as you imagine. In Lincolnshire there is hardly an orchard; in Staffordshire very little fruit." *Ib.* iv. 205. 'The greater part of the apples, and even of the onions, consumed in Great Britain, were in the last century [the seventeenth] imported from Flanders.' *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1811, i. 105. See *ib.* p. 210.

workhouse

workhouse¹ which they have in *contemplation*²—there's the word now. I do not know that they minded me, for they said nothing to me.

I have had so little inclination to motion that I have always gone the shortest way to Stowhill, and hardly any where else, so that I can tell you nothing new of Green's museum, but I design to visit him, and all friends.

I hope for a letter to-morrow, for you must not forget that I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

P.S. Why cannot Queeney write?

538.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, August 23, 1777.

At Lichfield? Yes; but not well. I have been trying a great experiment with ipecacuanha, which Akensyde⁴ had

¹ Johnson defines *workhouse* as 'a place where idlers and vagabonds are condemned to labour.' Hutton in his *History of Derby*, published in 1791 (p. 59), says that the design of workhouses, all of which had been established within memory, 'was an asylum for distress and a cure for the beggar.' As they are managed 'they are the nurseries of idleness, the corrupters of manners, the slaughter-houses of infants, and the plagues of old age.' In them perhaps not one infant in ten arrives at maturity. The old and weak 'are brow-beaten by the governor, and hunted by the rude.' Hutton had been an active Overseer of the Poor, and so spoke with authority. In G. M. Berkeley's *Poems*, published in 1797, Introduction, p. 310, it is stated that 'most well-regulated Bridewells are Paradises compared to the Oxford Work-house. Nothing out of the infernal

regions can be worse or worse conducted.'

² Landor in his *Imaginary Conversations: Johnson and Horne Tooke*, makes Tooke say:—'We do many things now which we never thought of doing formerly. We *contemplate* going to a ball and dancing a fandango.' Landor's *Works*, ed. 1876, iv. 249. To *contemplate* Johnson defines:—'To muse, to think studiously with long attention.'

³ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 356.

⁴ Mark Akenside, the poet and physician. He used to frequent Tom's Coffee-house in Devereux Court, close to Johnson's haunts, where no doubt the two men often met. One evening 'Saxby of the Custom House' attacked the profession of physic, which Akenside defended. 'Doctor,' said Saxby, 'after all you have said, my opinion of the profession of physic is this:

inclined

inclined me to consider as a remedy for all constrictions of the breath. Lawrence¹ indeed told me that he did not credit him, and no credit can I find him to deserve. One night I thought myself the better for it, but there is no certainty. On Wednesday night I took ten grains; the night was restless. On Thursday morning I took ten grains; the night again was restless. On Friday night I took twenty grains, which Akensyde mentions as the utmost that on these occasions he has *ventured* to give: the night was perhaps rather worse. I shall therefore take truce with ipecacuanha. Tell me, if you can, what I shall do next.

Mr. Thrale's heart may be at rest. It is not fine Mrs. Anne that has been caught by the *tænia*², but Mrs. Anne tumbled down stairs last night, and bruised her face. Both maid and mistress are very grateful to you for the kindness with which you procured the powders, and directed their use. They have not yet been tried. It has been washing week; and I suppose every body shrinks a little from such rough remedies, of which at last the success is doubtful. However it will, I think, be tried in all its formalities.

My master may plant and dig till his pond is an ocean, if he can find water, and his parterre a down³. I have no doubt of a most abundant harvest; and it is said that the produce of barley is particularly great. We are not far from the great year of a hundred thousand barrels, which, if three shillings be gained

The ancients endeavoured to make it a science, and failed; and the moderns to make it a trade, and have succeeded.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, pp. 244 6. In my edition of the *Life*, iii. 22, n. 4. I assign by mistake this sarcasm to Ballow, a lawyer. Burton in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. 1660, p. 373, quotes Mat. Riccius as saying of the physic in China there is 'no science, no school, no art, no degree, but like a trade every man in private is instructed of his master.' Dryden in his *Prologue to the University of Oxford*, says:—

'So poetry, which is in Oxford made

An art, in London only is a trade.'

Dryden's *Poems*, Aldine ed. iii. 89.

¹ *Ante*, i. 47, n. 2.

² *Ante*, ii. 18.

³ Johnson defines *parterre* as 'a level division of ground that for the most part faces the south and best front of an house, and is generally furnished with greens and flowers, &c.' *Greens* he does not define in its modern sense as a vegetable food, but as 'leaves: branches; wreaths.'

upon

upon each barrel, will bring us fifteen thousand pounds a-year. * * * * never pretended to more than thirty pounds a-day, which is not eleven thousand a-year. But suppose we shall get but two shillings a barrel, that is ten thousand a-year. I hope we still have the advantage. Would you for the other thousand have my master such a man as * * * * ?

I showed dear Quecney's letter to Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Porter, they both took her remembrance of them very kindly.

It was well done by Mr. Brooke to send for you. His house is one of my favourite places. His water is very commodious, and the whole place has the true old appearance of a little country town². I hope Miss goes, for she takes notice.

¹ Mrs. Piozzi in a marginal note fills up the gap with the name of Whitbread, and adds:—'He asked me to marry him after Mr. Thrale's death, when his fortune was much increased; on my refusal (he had three children) Lady Mary Cornwallis accepted his hand.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 309. Horace Walpole in 1781 speaks of 'Mr. Whitbread, the brewer, and his insolent wealth.' *Letters*, vii. 496. Johnson, *post*, Letter of October 24, 1778, speaks of 'the ambition of out-brewing Whitbread'; and Letter of November 16, 1779, of 'Mr. Thrale's desire of being the first brewer.' See *ante*, i. 194, n. 1, for Johnson's identification of himself with the Thrales in his use of *we*. In 1759-60 Whitbread was second and Thrale eighth among the brewers, the amount of barrels brewed by each being as follows:—

Whitbread	63,400
Thrale	32,700

Annual Register, 1760, i. 174. In 1786-7 Whitbread was first and Thrale third, as is shown in Pennant's *London*, ed. 1790, p. 279:—

	Barrels.
Whitbread, Samuel . .	150,280
Calvert, Felix	131,043
Thrale, Hester	105,559

The *Annual Register* for 1797, ii. 37, shows that Thrale's Brewery is second:—

	1795-6.	Barrels.
Whitbread		202,000
Thrale		137,810
	1796-7.	
Whitbread		192,740
Thrale		141,590

Calvert had fallen to the fifth place. Though Mrs. Thrale sold her brewery to Messrs. Barclay and Perkins in 1781 (*Life*, iv. 132), the style of the firm was not, it seems, changed so late as 1797.

² Mr. Francis Brooke, 'an eminent attorney-at-law,' lived near the Abbey at Town Malling or West Malling, a small country town on the road between Wrotham and Maidstone. Hasted's *History of Kent*, ed. 1782, ii. 219. Johnson, as his Diary shows, spent his birthday there in 1768. *Pr. and Med.*, p. 81. Mrs. Thrale wrote to him on September 18, 1777:—'Come, here is news of Town-malling—the quiet old-fashioned place in Kent, that you like so because it was agreeable to your own notions of a rural life; I believe we were the first people, except the master of it, who had for many years taken delight in

The

The races are next week. People seem to be weary of them, for many go out of town I suppose to escape the cost of entertaining company. Dr. Taylor will probably come, and probably take me away; and I shall leave Mrs. Aston.

Do not you lose, nor let Master lose, the kindness that you have for me. Nobody will ever love you both better than, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

539.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM, Lichfield, [Wednesday], August 27, 1777.

Our correspondence is not so vigorous as it used to be; but now you know the people at Lichfield, it is vain to describe them, and as no revolutions have happened, there is nothing to be said about them. We have a new Dean, whose name is Proby; he has the manners of a gentleman, and some spirit of discipline, which brings the cathedral into better method. He has a lady that talks about Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Carter².

the old coach without springs, the two roasted ducks in one dish, the fortified flower garden, and fir trees cut in figures.—A spirit of innovation has however reached even these at last.—The roads are mended; no more narrow shaded lanes, but clear open turnpike trotting. A yew hedge, or an eugh hedge if you will [see *ante*, i. 286, n. 5], newly cut down too by his nephew's desire. Ah those nephews! And a wall pulled away, which bore incomparable fruit—to *call in the country*—is the phrase. Mr. Thrale is wicked enough to urge on these rough reformers; how it will end I know not. For your comfort, the square canals still drop into one another; and the

chocolate is still made in the room by a maid, who curtsies as she presents every cup. Dear old Daddy Brooke looks well and even handsome at eighty-one years old; while I saw his sister, who is ninety-four years old, and calls him *Frankey*, eat more venison at a sitting than Mr. Thrale.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 376. There was a fashion at this time, not only to pull away garden walls, but to cut down fine avenues, so as to *call in the country*—to give a wider view, that is to say. See *Life*, v. 439.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 359.

² For the old Dean see *ante*, i. 300.

The new Dean's lady was, it seems, a somewhat haughty lady. I heard

On

On next Saturday I go to Ashbourne, and thither must my letters be sent, if you are pleased ever to write to me.

When I came hither I could hardly walk, but I have got better breath, and more agility. I intend to perambulate Master's dominions¹ every day at least once. But I have miserable, distressful, tedious nights; do you think they will mend at Bright-helmstone?

When I come to Ashbourne I will send my dear Queeney an account how I find things, for I hope she takes an interest in Dr. Taylor's prosperity.

This is race week; but Mrs. Aston, Mrs. Porter, and myself have no part in the course, or at the ball. We all sit at home, and perhaps pretend to wonder that others go, though I cannot charge any of us with much of that folly². Mrs. Gastrel, who wraps her head in a towel, is very angry at the present mode of dress and feathers³.

But amidst all these little things, there is one great thing. The harvest is abundant, and the weather *a la merveille*⁴. No season ever was finer. Barley, malt, beer, and money. There is the series of ideas. The deep logicians call it a *sortes*. I hope my master will no longer endure the reproach of not keeping me a horse⁵.

The puppies played us a vile trick when they tore my letter, but I hope my loss will be repaired to-morrow. You are in the way of business and intelligence, and have something to write.

at Lichfield the following verse quoted from some lines written against her:—

'She would far sooner from the steeple fling her,
Than let a tradesman touch her highborn finger.'

Her talk about Mrs. Montagu and the learned Mrs. Carter shows that she was somewhat of a Blue-stocking.

¹ Mr. Thrale's park at Streatham.

² 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'I am a great friend to public amusements; for they keep people from vice.' *Life*, ii. 169.

³ *Ante*, i. 258. Mrs. Gastrell was Mrs. Aston's sister.

⁴ He ought to have said *à merveille*. The earlier part of the summer had been very wet. *Ante*, ii. 16. Horace Walpole wrote on August 4:—'One would think the elements this summer came from Scotland.' But on September 29 he wrote:—'I did not use to love September, with all its betweenity of parched days and cold long evenings, but this has been all lustre and verdancy.' *Letters*, vi. 464, 489.

⁵ For Johnson's hunting see *ante*, i. 349, *n.* 4.

I am

I am here in unactive obscurity, and have little other pleasure than to perceive that the poor languishing lady¹ is glad to see me. I hope, dearest Lady, you will be glad to see me too; and that it will be long before disease lays hold upon you.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

540.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[Ashbourne], August 30, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 131.

541.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Ashbourne, September 1, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 132.

542.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAREST LADY,

[Ashbourne], Sept. 6, 1777.

It is true that I have loitered, and what is worse, loitered with very little pleasure. The time has run away, as most time runs, without account, without use, and without memorial. But to say this of a few weeks, though not pleasing, might be borne, but what ought to be the regret of him who, in a few days, will have so nearly the same to say of sixty-eight years? But complaint is vain.

If you have nothing to say from the neighbourhood of the metropolis, what can occur to me in little cities and petty towns; in places which we have both seen, and of which no description is wanted? I have left part of the company with which you dined here, to come and write this letter; in which I have nothing to tell, but that my nights are very tedious. I cannot persuade myself to forbear trying something.

As you have now little to do, I suppose you are pretty diligent at the *Thraliana*³, and a very curious collection posterity

¹ Mrs. Aston. *Ante*, ii. 17.

² *Piozzi Letters*, i. 361.

³ *Thraliana* is contained in six books, of about 300 page seach, and will

will find it. Do not remit the practice of writing down occurrences as they arise, of whatever kind, and be very punctual in annexing the dates. Chronology you know is the eye of history; and every man's life is of importance to himself. Do not omit painful casualties, or unpleasing passages, they make the variegation of existence; and there are many transactions, of which I will not promise with Æneas, *et hæc olim meminisse juvabit*¹. Yet that remembrance which is not pleasant may be useful. There is however an intemperate attention to slight circumstances which is to be avoided, lest a great part of life be spent in writing the history of the rest². Every day perhaps has something to be noted, but in a settled and uniform course few days can have much.

Why do I write all this, which I had no thought of when I begun? The Thraliana drove it all into my head. It deserves however an hour's reflection, to consider how, with the least loss of time, the loss of what we wish to retain may be prevented.

Do not neglect to write to me, for when a post comes empty, I am really disappointed.

Boswell, I believe, will meet me here.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

extends over thirty-two years and a half. The first entry is in these words:—"It is many years since Dr. Johnson advised me to get a little book and write in it all the little anecdotes which might come to my knowledge. . . . Mr. Thrale has now treated me with a repository, and provided it with the pompous title of *Thraliana*. I must endeavour to fill it with nonsense, new and old.—15th September, 1776." . . . The last:—"30th March, 1809.—Everything most dreaded has ensued. . . . All is over, and my second husband's death is the last thing recorded in my first husband's present.—Cruel Death!" Mr. Hayward adds that Mr. Salusbury, in whose possession

it was [in 1861], 'deemed it of too private and delicate a character to be submitted to strangers.' He supplied Mr. Hayward however with information extracted from it. Hayward's *Pioszi*, i. 7, 237. See her *Anecdotes*, p. 45, and *Life*, iv. 343. Johnson often urges her to 'annex the dates' to her letters, but with little effect. For his advice to keep a Journal see *ante*, i. 362, n. 1.

¹ *Æneid*, i. 203:—

'An hour will come with pleasure to relate

Your sorrows past as benefits of Fate.' DRYDEN.

² 'He again advised me to keep a journal fully and minutely, but not to mention such trifles as, that meat

To

543.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 8, 1777.

Surely the same vexatious interruption of our correspondence happens now that happened once when I was at Oxford². I write often, yet you seem not to have my letters. I charged Frank with trusting some other hand to the post-office, this he denies; and indeed I have answers to other letters.

I came hither on Saturday, August 30th. The books were not then come; but I suppose, according to Davies's letter, they came that evening³. Of the receipt of the powders I wrote word, and told that the girl delayed a little while to take them. From this place I wrote to Miss last Thursday, and to you last Saturday. Nothing has been mentioned by you of which I have not taken proper notice, except that I have said nothing of * * * *⁴. Many instances there are of the vanity of human solicitude, and it is not strange to find another. We were all planning out for him some mode of life, and disease was hovering over him. If he dies, his mother will lose what has engaged her care, and incited her vanity. The son and the estate go away together. But life occupies us all too much to leave us room for any care of others beyond what duty enjoins; and no duty enjoins sorrow or anxiety that is at once troublesome and useless. I would readily help the poor lady, but if I cannot do her good by assisting her, I shall not disturb myself by lamenting

was too much or too little done, or that the weather was fair or rainy.' *Life*, ii. 358.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 364.

² *Ante*, i. 327.

³ The books were Cook's *Voyages*. *Ante*, ii. 19. Davies was most likely Tom Davies, the bookseller. *Life*, i. 390.

⁴ Mrs. Thrale in a note, dated September 18, says that she is anxious about Quency, 'whose first cousin * * * * is now absolutely dying

of a consumption.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 375. Johnson, *post*, pp. 29, 34, 38, alludes to the same case. Baretti in his notes says that Lady Lade, Mr. Thrale's sister (*ante*, i. 219, n. 3), is the mother, and Sir John Lade the invalid son. He describes him as 'a most hopeful gentleman that has married a harlot.' See *Life*, iv. 412, for an account of him, and for the verses which Johnson wrote on his coming of age.

her :

her¹: yet I suppose his death will be as hard a blow as is commonly felt. Let me know if you hear how he goes on. I go on but uneasily.

I am in hopes of seeing Mr. Boswell, and then he may perhaps tell me something to write, for this is but a barren place. Not a mouse stirring².

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

544.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Ashbourne, September, 11, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 135.

545.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 13, 1777.

Now I write again, having just received your letter dated the 10th.

You must not let foolish fancies take hold on your imagination. If Queeney grows tall, she is sufficiently bulky, and as much out of danger of a consumption as nature allows a young maiden to be⁴. Of real evils the number is great, of possible evils there is no end. * * * *⁵ is really to be pitied. Her son in danger; the estate likely to pass not only from her, but to those on whom, I suppose, she would least wish it bestowed, and her system of life broken, are very heavy blows. But she will at last be rich, and will have much gratification in her power, both rational and sensual.

¹ 'Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others, Johnson said:—"Why, Sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, Sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good: more than that, Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose."' *Life*, ii. 94. See *ante*, i. 141.

² *Hamlet*, Act i. sc. 1.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 366.

⁴ This must be an answer to one of Mrs. Thrale's Letters, dated in her Collection five days *later*, in which she writes:—"Something always happens when you go to Lichfield; and our sitting down thirteen to table yesterday made my fool's nerves flutter for Queeney. * * * Mr. Murphy said, she had a hectic colour." *Piozzi Letters*, i. 375.

⁵ *Ante*, ii. 28.

Boswell,

Boswell, I believe, is coming. He talks of being here to-day. I shall be glad to see him. But he shrinks from the Baltick expedition, which I think is the best scheme in our power. What we shall substitute, I know not. He wants to see Wales, but except the woods of Bachycraigh what is there in Wales? What can fill the hunger of ignorance, or quench the thirst of curiosity?¹ We may perhaps form some scheme or other, but, in the phrase of Hockley in the Hole, it is a pity he has not a better bottom².

Tell my young mistress that this day's letter is too short, and it brings me no news either foreign or domestick.

I am going to dine with Mr. Dyot, and Frank tells sternly, that it is past two o'clock³.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

548.

TO MRS. ASTON⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

As I left you so much disordered, a fortnight is a long time

¹ Boswell had written to Johnson on September 9:—'Let us, by all means, have another expedition. I shrink a little from our scheme of going up the Baltick. I am sorry you have already been in Wales; for I wish to see it.' *Life*, iii. 134. After Johnson had returned from Wales he wrote:—'Wales is so little different from England that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller.' *Ib.* ii. 284. Bachycraigh (the name is spelt in a variety of ways) was the property of Mrs. Thrale. Johnson visited it in 1774. *Ib.* v. 436.

² Hockley in the Hole in Clerkenwell is described in the *Spectator*, No. 436, as 'a place of no small renown for the gallantry of the lower order of Britons.' See *Life*, iii. 134. n. 1. In an account of a prize-fight on Wimbledon Common on April 6, 1796, we read:—'The combatants

set to soon after two o'clock, and after four rounds only the Irishman was declared victor. The want of what in the language of boxers is termed *bottom* on the part of the combatants disgusted the company exceedingly. The parties fought in a hollow, very near the foot of Abbershaw's Gibbet, who seemed to regard the combat with the utmost apathy. When the victor had been duly crowned with a wreath of shamrock, and quaffed a libation to the memory of *Big Ben* [Abbershaw, I conjecture] in a pint of Liptrap's best gin, the cavalcade moved towards the metropolis with becoming decency.' *Sporting Magazine* for April, 1796, p. 46.

³ Mrs. Dyot has been mentioned before. *Ante*, i. 342. Frank was Johnson's black servant.

⁴ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 539. Corrected by me to

to be without any account of your health. I am willing to flatter myself that you are better, though you gave me no reason to believe that you intended to use any means for your recovery. Nature often performs wonders, and will, I hope, do for you more than you seem inclined to do for yourself.

In this weakness of body with which it has pleased God to visit you, he has given you great cause of thankfulness, by the total exemption of your Mind from all effects of your disorder. Your Memory is not less comprehensive or distinct, nor your reason less vigorous and acute, nor your imagination less active and spritely than in any former time of your life. This is a great Blessing, as it respects enjoyment of the present, and a blessing yet far greater as it bestows power and opportunity to prepare for the future.

All sickness is a summons. But as you do not want exhortations, I will send you only my good wishes, and intreat¹ you to believe the good wishes very sincere, of,

Dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Ashbourne, Sept. 13, 1777.

To Mrs. Aston, at Stowhill, Lichfield.

547.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

[Ashbourne], Sept. 15, 1777.

Do you call this punctual correspondence? There was poor I writing, and writing, and writing, on the 8th, on the 11th³, on the 13th; and on the 15th I looked for a letter, but I may look and look. Instead of writing to me you are writing the *Thraliana*⁴. But—he *must be humble who would please*⁵.

Last night came Boswell. I am glad that he is come. He seems to be very brisk and lively, and laughs a little at * * * *⁶.

from the original in Pembroke College Library.

¹ Johnson in his *Dictionary* only gives *entreat*, but Bailey gives the word under both forms.

² *Piozzi Letters*, i. 368.

³ This letter is not published.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 26, n. 3.

⁵ *Ante*, i. 352, n. 1.

⁶ 'On Sunday evening, September 14, I arrived at Ashbourne, and drove directly up to Dr. Taylor's door.

I told

I told him something of the scene at Richmond¹. You find, now you have seen the *progenies Langtoniana*, that I did not praise them without reason; yet the second girl is my favourite.

You talk of pine-apples and venison. Pine-apples it is sure we have none; but venison, no forester that lived under the green-wood-tree ever had more frequently upon his table. We fry, and roast, and bake, and devour in every form.

We have at last fair weather in Derbyshire², and every where the crops are spoken of as uncommonly exuberant. Let us now get money and save it. All that is paid is saved, and all that is laid out in land or malt. But I long to see twenty thousand pounds in the bank, and to see my master visiting this estate and that, as purchases are advertised³. But perhaps all this may be when Colin's forgotten and gone⁴. Do not let me be forgotten before I am gone, for you will never have such another, as,

Dearest dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson and he appeared before I had got out of the post-chaise, and welcomed me cordially.' *Life*, iii. 135. It was Taylor whom Boswell laughed at. For his account of that 'hearty English 'Squire, with the parson super-induced,' see *ib.* ii. 473; iii. 180, and for Johnson's laugh at Taylor, *post*, Letter of May 25, 1780.

¹ Mrs. Thrale replied:—'I am glad the Richmond scene diverted you; my master laughed when I read it over to him.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 377. The next passage in Johnson's letter leads me to think that Bennet Langton was at this time living at Richmond, and that it was his mode of life which was described. *Life*, iii. 48, 338. Mrs. Thrale in her letter of the 18th says:—'Mr. Thrale is cured of his passion for Lady R—already.' Langton's wife was the

dowager Lady Rothes. For his three lovely children see *ante*, i. 393.

² The weather in Staffordshire had been extraordinarily fine nearly three weeks earlier. *Ante*, ii. 25.

³ 'Even Johnson could not help dreaming felicities for himself, and, what is more ridiculous, for others. The two last years of Thrale's life his Brewery brought him thirty thousand a year neat profit. Was it happy on that account?' He died.'—BARETT.

⁴ 'While Colin forgotten and gone No more shall be talked of or seen;

Unless when beneath the pale moon,

His ghost shall glide over the green.'

ROWE. Campbell's *British Poets*, ed. 1845, p. 334. See *post*, Letter of April 11, 1780.

548.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 18, 1777.

Here is another birth-day. They come very fast. I am now sixty-eight. To lament the past is vain; what remains is to look for hope in futurity. Queeney has now passed another year². I hope every year will bring her happiness.

Boswell is with us in good-humour; and plays his part with his usual vivacity³. We are to go in the Doctor's vehicle and dine at Derby to-morrow.

Do you know any thing of Bolt-court? Invite Mr. Levet to dinner, and make enquiry what family he has, and how they proceed⁴. I had a letter lately from Mrs. Williams. Dr. Lewis⁵ visits her, and has added ipecacuanha to her bark: but I do not hear much of her amendment. Age is a very stubborn disease. Yet Levet sleeps sound every night⁶. I am sorry for poor Seward's pain; but he may live to be better⁷.

Mr. * * * * *'s erection of an urn looks like an intention to bury me alive; I would as willingly see my friend, however benevolent and hospitable, quietly inurned. Let him think for the present of some more acceptable memorial⁸.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 370.

² 'Thursday, September 18. Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room, should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said, it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well (said I), for it is Dr. Johnson's birth-day."' When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birth-day. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly) "he would *not* have the lustre lighted the next day.'" *Life*, iii. 157. Queeney's birth-day came a day earlier.

³ 'That is, he makes more noise than anybody in company, talking and laughing loud.'—BARETTI.

⁴ I should never have expected that Levett (*Life*, i. 243) was admitted to Mrs. Thrale's table. For the enquiry about him see *post*, p. 39.

⁵ He is mentioned *post*, Letter of October 16, 1779.

⁶ He slept too soundly one night more than four years later, when

'Death broke at once the vital chain,

And freed his soul the nearest way.'

Life, iv. 137-9.

⁷ *Ante*, i. 346, n. 1. He lived till 1799. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, vi. 217.

⁸ Colonel Myddelton set up an urn to him; but not, the inscription seems to show, till after his death. *Life*, iv. 421, n. 2. Boswell told Johnson, when they were at Auchinleck, that he intended to erect a monu-

Does

Does nobody tell * * * that a warmer climate and a clearer air is likely to help her son, and that it may be convenient to run away from an English winter, before he becomes too weak for travel? It appears to me not improbable that change of air, and the amusement and exercise of easy journeys, might enable one so young to overcome his disease¹.

Dr. Taylor has another buck. You must not talk to us of venison. Fruit indeed we have little, and that little not very good; but what there is has been very liberally bestowed².

Mr. L——³ and the Doctor still live on different sides of the street.

We have had, for some time past, such harvest weather as a Derbyshire farmer dares scarcely hope. The harvest has this year been every where a month backward, but so far as I can hear, has recompensed the delay by uncommon plenty. Next year will, I hope, complete Mr. Thrale's wish of an hundred thousand barrels⁴. Ambition is then to have an end, and he must remember, that *non minor est virtus quam quærere, parta tuere*⁵. When he has climbed so high, his care must be to keep himself from falling.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

549.

TO MRS. THRALE⁶.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 20, 1777.

I do not remember what has happened that you write on mourning paper, and use black wax.

ment to him there. 'He could not bear to have death presented to him in any shape; for his constitutional melancholy made the king of terrors more frightful. He turned off the subject, saying, "Sir, I hope to see your grand-children!"' *Life*, v. 380.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 28, n. 4.

² 'I have heard Dr. Johnson protest that he never had quite as much as he wished of wall-fruit except once in his life, and that was when we were all together at Ombersley.' Piozzi's

Anecdotes, p. 103.

³ Mr. Langley. *Ante*, i. 347.

⁴ 'Thrale went greatly beyond his hundred thousand barrels, and a good deal of their produce is now enjoyed by a paltry singing-master.' BARETTI. *Ante*, ii. 23.

⁵ *Tueri*. OVID. *Ars Amat.* ii. 13. This misprint illustrates what Johnson said of Mrs. Thrale:—'Her learning is that of a school-boy in one of the lower forms.' *Life*, i. 494.

⁶ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 379.

B——

B—— liked S—— better as he knew him more, and seems well pleased to be remembered by him and my master¹.

Pretty dear Queeney! I wish her many and many happy birth-days. I hope you will never lose her, though I should go to Lichfield, and though she should sit the thirteenth in many a company².

You have nothing to say because you live at Streatham, and expect me to say much when I return from Lichfield and Ashbourne, places to be considered as abounding in novelty, and supplying every hour materials for history. It is as much as I can do to furnish every post with a letter; I keep nothing behind for oral communication.

I took Boswell yesterday to see Keddlestone³, and the silk mills⁴, and the china work at Derby; he was pleased with all. The Derby china is very pretty, but I think the gilding is all superficial; and the finer pieces are so dear, that perhaps silver vessels of the same capacity may be sometimes bought at the same price; and I am not yet so infected with the contagion of china-fancy, as to like any thing at that rate which can so easily be broken⁵.

¹ B—— is Boswell, and S—— Seward, who had lately visited Edinburgh. *Life*, iii. 123, 6.

² *Ante*, ii. 29, n. 4.

³ Lord Scarsdale's seat. Here Johnson saw lying 'in his Lordship's dressing-room his small *Dictionary*'; showing it to Boswell he said:— 'Look 'ye. *Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?*' *Life*, iii. 161.

⁴ The silk-mills were those in which William Hutton just forty years earlier had brought his servitude of 'intolerable severity' to an end. He describes them as 'a place most curious and pleasing to the eye, but which gave me a seven years' heart-ache.' *Life of William Hutton*, p. 24, and Hutton's *History of Derby*,

pp. 193–205. Johnson's definition of *mill* does not include a silk-mill; he defines it as 'an engine or fabrick in which corn is ground to meal, or any other body is comminuted.'

⁵ 'The same fashion a few years ago prevailed in Genoa, which still has place in England and Holland, of using services of China-ware instead of plate; but the senate, foreseeing the consequence, prohibited the use of that brittle commodity beyond a certain extent; while the use of silver-plate was left unlimited. And I suppose in their late distresses they felt the good effect of this ordinance. Our tax on plate is perhaps in this view somewhat impolitic.' Hume's *Essays*, ed. 1770, ii. 93.

Master is very inconstant to Lady R——¹. Did he not hold out against forty such repellents from Mrs. P——? He grows nice I find; let him try whether nicety will make him happy.

Boswell has spent more money than he expected, and I must supply him with part of his expences home². I have not much with me, and beg Master to send me by the next post a note of ten pounds, which I will punctually return, not in opportunities of beneficence, though the noblest payment in the world, but in money, or bank-paper. Do not let him forget me.

Do not suppose that I wrote this letter on purpose to borrow. *My soul disdains it*. I did not think on it when I began to write. When I miss a post, I consider myself as deviating from the true rule of action. Seeing things in *this light*, I consider every letter as something in *the line* of duty; upon *this foot* I make my arrangement, and *under whatever circumstances* of difficulty, endeavour to carry them into execution: for having in some degree *pledged myself* for the performance, I think the resolution both of my head and my heart engaged, and *reprobate* every thought of desisting from the undertaking³.

¹ Perhaps Lady R—— is Lady Rothes, the wife of Bennet Langton. The Thrales apparently had visited them at their house at Richmond. *Ante*, ii. 32. Another Lady Rothes had married Dr. Lucas Pepys. *Early Diary of Fanny Burney*, ii. 306, n. 2. If she were meant, Mrs. P—— might be a former Mrs. Pepys.

² 'When I happened to mention that the expence of my jaunt would come to much more than I had computed, he said, "Why, Sir, if the expence were to be an inconvenience, you would have reason to regret it: but, if you have had the money to spend, I know not that you could have purchased as much pleasure with it in any other way."' *Life*, iii. 196.

³ Boswell records that during this visit to Ashbourne, Johnson one day 'found fault with me for using

the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see (said he) the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to *coin* it: you should say *get* money." * * * He was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms; such as, *pledging myself*, for *undertaking*; *line*, for *department*, or *branch*, as, the *civil line*, the *banking line*.' *Life*, iii. 196. In a note on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act iv. sc. 7, he says:—'*To come off* seems to mean what is in our time expressed by *to come down*, to pay liberally and readily. These accidental and colloquial senses are the disgrace of language and the plague of commentators.' Mrs. Piozzi, in her *Synonymy*, i. 93, repeating no doubt what she remembered from Johnson's talk,

Howel tells of a few words in Spanish, the true utterance of which will denominate the speaker *bueno Romancador*; the last sentence will *un bueno politico*¹. He that can rattle those words well together may say all that political controversy generally produces.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

P.S. Nay, but do enquire after Bolt-court.

550.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne. Sept. 22, 1777.

Now to sit down to tell me a long newspaper story about Lord Harcourt and his dog³.—I hoped when you had seen Levet you would have learned something that concerned me.

says:—‘A man cannot lie *under* circumstances, because they are sure to stand *around* him.’ Landor says that ‘Hurd writes, “*under* the *circumstances*.” Circumstances are *about* us, not *above* us.’ Landor’s *Works*, ed. 1876, v. 108. Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield), in his legal opinion about Johnson’s libellous definition of *Excise*, given in 1755, says:—‘*Under* all the circumstances.’ *Life*, i. 295, n. 9. Johnson surely forgets his fourteenth definition of *under*, as ‘in a state of being liable to, or limited by,’ where he quotes ‘under pain of greater displeasure,’ ‘under a necessity,’ &c.

¹ Howell, in a letter written from Madrid on August 1, 1623 (Book ii. No. 71), says:—‘The conclusion of this rambling letter shall be a rhyme of certain hard throaty words which I was taught lately, and they are accounted the difficultest in all the whole Castilian language; insomuch that he who is able to pronounce them is accounted *Buen Romancista*,

a good speaker of Spanish: *Abeja y oueja y piedra que rabeia, pendola tras oreja, y lugar en la ygreia, dessea a su hijo la vieja*.’ Johnson says that in like manner the last sentence of the letter in the text, containing as it does the cant phrases of the orators or political writers of the day, will denominate the speaker a good politician.

² *Piozzi Letters*, i. 382.

³ Horace Walpole wrote on Sept. 18 about ‘an amazing piece of news that I have this moment received from town. The dinner-bell had rung—where? at Nuneham. The Earl [Lord Harcourt] did not appear. After much search, he was found standing on his head in a well, a dear little favourite dog upon his legs, his stick and one of his gloves lying near.’ He added in his next letter that ‘in all probability he perished by trying to save his dog. You know how that must touch *me*.’ *Letters*, vi. 481, 3.

I hope

I hope Master has been so kind as to send me the ten pounds, else I shall be forced to borrow at Ashbourne or Lichfield.

Boswell has been this morning with me to see Ham Garden¹. He talks of going away this week, and I shall not think of staying here much longer, though the wind whistles very prettily. My nights are still such as I do not like; but complaint will not mend them.

If * * * ² holds life to one-and-twenty, he will probably live on; for his constitution, if it does not grow weaker, will become firmer. The harvest in Staffordshire has been such for plenty, and so well gathered, as to be mentioned with admiration³. Make your most of these golden years, and buy liberally what will now be liberally allowed. I hope to partake a little of the general abundance—But I am now sixty-eight. Make good use, my dear Lady, of your days of health and sprightliness. Sixty-eight is coming fast upon you;—let it not find you wondering what has become of all the past.

If Aunt⁴ comes now, she can do but little harm, for she will hardly go with you to Brighthelmstone, and she cannot long trouble you at Streatham.

I hope soon to come to Lichfield, and from Lichfield to London.

Taylor and Bos. send their compliments with those of, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Ilam or Islam in Dovedale. It had been formerly the seat of the Congreves. Boswell was shown a recess in which Congreve was said to have written his *Old Bachelor*. It was on the road to Ilam that Johnson told Boswell how the *Plan of the Dictionary* came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield. The Thrales and Johnson had seen the place in 1774. *Life*, i. 183, n. 4; iii. 187; v. 429.

² Sir John Lade. *Ante*, ii. 28, n. 4.

³ The Earl of Carlisle wrote from Castle Howard on September 12:—‘We have great quantities of fruit, and better flavoured than I ever remember. The weather is very favourable for the harvest, and there are great appearances of plenty. Our farmers will be puzzled for cause of complaint.’ *Schwyn and his Contemporaries*, ed. 1882, iii. 228.

⁴ She is mentioned, *post*, pp. 44, 47.

551.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 25, 1777.

Boswell is gone ; and is, I hope, pleased that he has been here ; though to look on any thing with pleasure is not very common. He has been gay and good-humoured in his usual way², but we have not agreed upon any other expedition. He had spent more money than he intended, and I supplied him ; my deficiencies are again made up by Mr. Thrale's bill, for which I thank him.

I will send directions to the taylor to make me some cloaths according to Mr. Thrale's direction³, though I cannot go with you to Brighthelmstone, having loitered away the time I know not how ; but if you would have me, I will endeavour to follow you, which upon the whole may perhaps be as well. I am here now on the 25th, and am obliged by promise to take Lichfield in my way, so that the 30th will come upon me too soon.

The Levet that has been found in the register must be some other Levet⁴ ; I dare say our friend does not in his heart believe that it is he.

I am glad that the Benedictines found you at last. Father Wilkes, when he was amongst us, took Oxford in his way. I recommended him to Dr. Adams, on whom he impressed

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 384.

² 'That is, in his noisy and silly way.' BARETTI. 'From this meeting at Ashbourne,' writes Boswell, 'I derived a considerable accession to my Johnsonian store.' *Life*, iii. 208. He stayed there but ten days ; nevertheless the account of the visit fills 74 pages of my edition of the *Life*. In the quietness of the country he found it no doubt much easier 'to keep his Journal very diligently.'

³ Boswell says that 'by associating with Mrs. Thrale Johnson's external appearance was much improved. He got better clothes ; and

the dark colour, from which he never deviated, was enlivened by metal buttons.' *Life*, iii. 325.

⁴ Mrs. Thrale had written on September 18 :—'My husband bids me tell you that he has examined the register, and that Levet is only seventy-two.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 374. Johnson, *post*, Letter of August 14, 1780, speaks of him as being fourscore. In the lines he wrote on his death in 1782, he says :—

'His frame was firm, his powers were bright,

Though now his eightieth year was nigh.' *Life*, iv. 138.

a high

a high opinion of his learning. I am glad that my cell is reserved¹. I may perhaps some time or other visit it, though I cannot easily tell why one should go to Paris twice. Our own beds are soft enough². Yet my master will tell you, that one wants to be doing something. I have something like a longing to see my master's performances³; a pleasure which I shall hardly have till he returns from Brighthelmstone. I beg that before you go you will send the *Bibliographia Britannica* to my habitation⁴.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

P.S. Let your next be sent to Lichfield.

552.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Sept. 27, 1777.

I think I have already told you that Bos. is gone. The day before he went, we met the Duke and Duchess of Argyll in the street, and went to speak to them while they changed horses⁶; and in the afternoon Mrs. Langton and Juliet⁷ stopped in their

¹ See *ante*, i. 401, 406.

² Mrs. Thrale had written:—'Mr. Cowley [the Prior of the Benedictines] says that a cell is kept ready for your use. We asked Lord Mulgrave to meet him, and he said a thing so like a thing of your saying, that I will repeat it directly. We talked of England and France.—The beds are softer there than here, quoth my master. Softer, if you will, but not so clean, Sir, replied the Prior.—No, no, dirty enough to be sure, confessed Mr. Thrale, but exceeding soft. Why then, interrupts Lord Mulgrave, one may infer, that a hog in England lives just like a gentleman in France I find—so there let the parallel rest. Now was not that speech quite in the spirit of our dear Mr. Johnson?' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 374. Just as Johnson did not care to see Paris twice, so neither did he care to visit a second time Wales or

the Hebrides. 'Other people,' he said, 'may go and see the Hebrides.' *Life*, iii. 134; iv. 199.

³ His alterations at Streatham. *Ante*, ii. 22.

⁴ It was, I think, the *Biographia Britannica* that he wanted to see. He told Boswell at Ashbourne that 'he had been asked to undertake the new edition of that work, but had declined it.' *Life*, iii. 174. Bolt Court, it may be noticed, he here speaks of as his habitation; his home was at Streatham. *Ante*, i. 129, and *post*, Letter of November 7, 1779.

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 386.

⁶ They had dined with them in Inverary Castle in October, 1773. *Life*, v. 353. It is strange that Boswell in the *Life of Johnson* passes over this meeting in silence; the omission must, I think, have been intentional.

⁷ If these ladies were Bennet way

way to London, and sent for me; I went to them, and sent for Boswell, whom Mrs. Langton had never seen.

And so, here is this post without a letter. I am old, I am old, says Sir John Falstaff¹. 'Take heed, my dear, youth flies apace.' You will be wanting a letter sometime. I wish I were with you, but I cannot come yet.

————Nives et frigora Rheni

Me sine sola vides: Ah, ne te frigora lædant!

Ah, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!²

I wish you well; B—— and all; and shall be glad to know your adventures. Do not however think wholly to escape me; you will, I hope, see me at Brighthelmstone. Dare you answer me, as Brutus answered his evil genius³?

I know not when I shall write again, now you are going to the world's end. *Extra anni solisque vias*⁴, where the post will be a long time in reaching you. I shall, notwithstanding all distance, continue to think on you, and to please myself with the hope of being once again,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Langton's mother and sister they were not on the direct road to London from the family seat in Lincolnshire. A passage in the next letter seems however to show that some actress and her daughter or companion were described.

¹ 2 *Henry IV*, Act ii. sc. 4.

² VIRGIL. *Eclogues*, x. 47.

³ While you (alas, that I should find it so!)

To shun my sight your native soil forego,

And climb the frozen Alps, and tread the eternal snow.

Ye frosts and snows her tender body spare.

Those are not limbs for icicles to tear.'

DRYDEN.

It is to a visit to Brighton that

Johnson applies these lines.

³ 'BRUTUS. Speak to me what thou art.

GHOST. Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

BRUTUS. Why comest thou?

GHOST. To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

BRUTUS. Well: then I shall see thee again?

GHOST. Ay, at Philippi.

BRUTUS. Why, I will see thee at Philippi then.'

Julius Cæsar, Act iv. sc. 3.

⁴ VIRGIL. *Æneid*, vi. 796.

'Beyond the solar year, without the starry way.'

DRYDEN.

Virgil is a second time brought in to describe the remoteness of Brighton. See also *post*, p. 45. In 1770 the post, which had hitherto gone four

To

553.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Michaelmass day, 1777.

And so because you hear that Mrs. Desmoulines² has written, you hold it not necessary to write; as if she could write like you, or I were equally content with hearing from her.—Call you this, backing your friends³? She did write, and I remember nothing in her letter, but that she was discontented that I wrote only Madam to her, and Dear Madam to Mrs. Williams⁴. Without any great dearness in the comparison, Williams is, I think, the dearer of the two. I am glad that she mends, but I am afraid she cannot get the start of the season, and Winter will come before she is prepared for it.

But at Streatham there are dears and dears, who before this letter reaches them will be at Brighthelmstone. Wherever they be, may they have no uneasiness but for want of me.

Now you are gone, I wonder how long you design to stay; pray let me know when you write to Lichfield, for I have not lost hope of coming to you, yet that purpose may chance to fail. But my comfort is, that you cannot charge me with forgetting you when I am away. You perhaps do not think how eagerly I expect the post.

Mrs. * * * * grows old, and has lost much of her undulation and mobility. Her voice likewise is spoiled; she can come upon

days a week to Brighton, began to go every day but Sunday, from Midsummer to Michaelmas in every year. For the other nine months it still went only four days. Dodsley's *Environs of London*, v. 221, and *Court and City Register* for 1775, p. 121.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 388.

² Boswell going up to London in the following March writes:—'I found Dr. Johnson at his own house, sitting with Mrs. Williams, and was informed that the room formerly allotted to me was now appropriated to a charitable purpose; Mrs. Des-

moulines, and I think her daughter, and a Miss Carmichael, being all lodged in it. Such was his humanity, and such his generosity, that Mrs. Desmoulines herself told me, he allowed her half-a-guinea a week. Let it be remembered, that this was above a twelfth part of his pension.' *Life*, iii. 222. She was the daughter of his godfather. *Ante*, i. 6, n. 3.

³ 'Call you that backing of your friends?' 1 *Henry IV*, Act ii. sc. 4.

⁴ See *post*, Letter of Nov. 7, 1779, for 'Discord keeping her residence in this habitation,' and *Life*, iii. 461.

the

the stage now only for her own benefit¹. But Juliet is airy and cheerful, and has I hope done lamenting the inconstancy of man. My mistress is represented as unable to bear them company. There was not time for many questions, and no opportunity of winding and winding them, as Mr. Richardson² has it, so as to get truth out without questions. I do not indeed know that I am any great winder. I suspect a winder to be always a man vacant, and commonly little-minded. I think my dear little mistress no great proficient at winding, though she could wind if she would, *contemnit potius quam nescit*.

Dr. Taylor desires always to have his compliments sent. He is, in his usual way, very busy; getting a bull to his cows, and a dog to his bitches. His waterfall runs very well. Old Shakespeare is dead, and he wants to buy another horse for his mares³. He is one of those who finds every hour *something new to wish or to enjoy*⁴.

Boswell while he was here saw Keddlestone and the silk mills, and took Chatsworth in his way home⁵. He says, his wife does not love me quite well yet, though we have made a formal peace⁶. He kept his journal very diligently; but then what was there to journalize. I should be glad to see what he says

¹ *Ante*, ii. 40, n. 7.

² Mrs. Piozzi, in a marginal note on her own copy of the *Piozzi Letters*, says:—‘Dr. Johnson said, that if Mr. Richardson had lived till I came out, my praises would have added two or three years to his life. “For,” says Dr. Johnson, “that fellow died merely for want of change among his flatterers: he perished for want of *more*, like a man obliged to breathe the same air till it is exhausted.”’ Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 311.

³ *Ante*, i. 341.

⁴ ‘Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or
to enjoy!’

DRYDEN. *Absalom and Achitophel*, l. 553.

⁵ For Keddlestone and the silk-mills see *ante*, ii. 35. It was at Edensor Inn, close by Chatsworth, that the landlord told Boswell that ‘the celebrated Dr. Johnson had been in his house. I inquired *who* this Dr. Johnson was, that I might hear mine host’s notion of him. “Sir, (said he,) Johnson, the great writer; *Oddity*, as they call him. He’s the greatest writer in England; he writes for the ministry; he has a correspondence abroad, and lets them know what’s going on.”’ *Life*, iii. 209.

⁶ It was she who said to her husband:—‘I have seen many a bear led by a man, but I never before saw a man led by a bear.’ *Ib.* ii. 269, n. 1.

of¹. I think I told you that I took him to Ham².

Why should you suspect me of forgetting lilly lolly³? Now you will see the Shellys⁴, and perhaps hear something about the Cottons⁵; and you will bathe, and walk, and dress, and dance, and who knows how little you will think on, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

554.

TO MRS. THRALE⁶.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, October 6, 1777.

You are glad that I am absent; and I am glad that you are sick⁷. When you went away, what did you do with your aunt? I am glad she liked my Susy; I was always a Susy, when nobody else was a Susy⁸. How have you managed at your new place? Could you all get lodgings in one house, and meat at one table? Let me hear the whole series of misery; for, as Dr. Young says, *I love horror*.

Methinks you are now a great way off; and if I come, I have a great way to come to you; and then the sea is so cold, and the rooms are so dull: yet I do love to hear the sea roar and my

¹ Beauclerk, I suspect, is the name omitted. It suits the number of the asterisks. Johnson had just heard from Boswell a story to his [Johnson's] disadvantage told by Beauclerk. *Life*, iii. 194, 209, 211.

² Ham. *Ante*, ii. 38, n. 1.

³ Mrs. Piozzi explains this in a marginal note. A Welsh squire had a half-witted son—his sole heir, whom he brought to a Christmas party at Llewenny Hall. "What does the child say?" cries my aunt; "it sounds like lilly lolly." "Indeed, my Lady Betty," replies the mother, in a sharp Welsh accent. "Dick does say lilly lolly, sure enough; but he *mains* :—How do you do, Sir Robert Cotton?" Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 310.

⁴ The Letters of October 31, 1778, and August 25, 1780, show that the friend of the Thrales was Sir John Shelley, of Maresfield Park, Sussex. He was not an ancestor of the poet Shelley.

⁵ Johnson in his tour to Wales in 1774 had visited Combermere, the seat of Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, Mrs. Thrale's cousin. *Life*, v. 433.

⁶ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 1.

⁷ This is explained by a passage in his first letter to Boswell after they parted:—"Mrs. Thrale is in hopes of a young brewer." *Life*, iii. 210. On July 3 of the following year he wrote:—"Mrs. Thrale, poor thing, has a daughter." *Ib.* p. 363.

⁸ *Ante*, i. 354.

mistress

mistress talk—For when she talks, ye gods! how she will talk¹. I wish I were with you, but we are now near half the length of England asunder. It is frightful to think how much time must pass between writing this letter and receiving an answer, if any answer were necessary².

Taylor is now going to have a ram; and then, after Aries and Taurus, we shall have Gemini. His oats are now in the wet; here is a deal of rain. Mr. Langdon bought, at Nottingham fair, fifteen tun of cheese; which, at an ounce a-piece, will suffice after dinner for four hundred and eighty thousand men³. This is all the news that the place affords. I purpose soon to be at Lichfield, but know not just when, having been defeated of my first design. When I come to town, I am to be very busy about my Lives.—Could not you do some of them for me?

I am glad Master unspelled⁴ you, and run you all on rocks, and drove you about, and made you stir. Never be cross about it. Quiet and calmness you have enough of—a little hurry stirs life—and,

Brushing o'er, adds motion to the pool⁵.

Now *pool* brings my master's excavations into my head. I wonder how I shall like them; I should like not to see them, till we all see them together. He will have no waterfall to roar like the Doctor's. I sat by it yesterday, and read Erasmus's *Militis Christiani Enchiridion*⁶. Have you got that book?

Make my compliments to dear Queeney. I suppose she will

¹ *Ante*, i. p. 207.

² He was at Ashbourne and she at Brighton.

³ Johnson must have reckoned a ton as made up of 20 cwt. of 100 lbs. each. For his 'delight in exercising his mind on the science of numbers,' see *Life*, i. 72; iii. 207.

⁴ This word is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

⁵ 'Nor love is always of a vicious kind,

But oft to virtuous acts inflames
the mind;

Awakes the sleepy vigour of the soul,

And brushing o'er adds motion
to the pool.'

DRYDEN, quoted in Johnson's *Dictionary* under *To Brush*.

⁶ It was translated into English in 1544 under the following title:—'Enchiridion Militis Christiani; which may be called in Englysche, the handsome weapon of a Chrysten Knyght, replenyshed with many goodly and godly preceptes; made by the famos clerke ERASMUS of Rotterdame, and newly corrected and imprinted.'

dance at the Rooms¹, and your heart will go one knows not how.

I am, dearest, and dearest Lady,
Your most humble servant,
SAM: JOHNSON.

555.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

[Ashbourne], October 13, 1777.

Yet I do love to hear from you. Such pretty kind letters as you send. But it gives me great delight to find that my master misses me. I begin to wish myself with you more than I should do, if I were wanted less. It is a good thing to stay away till one's company is desired, but not so good to stay after it is desired.

You know I have some work to do. I did not set to it very soon; and if I should go up to London with nothing done, what would be said, but that I was—who can tell what? I therefore stay till I can bring up something to stop their mouths, and then——³.

¹ Miss Burney, going to the Rooms at Brighton in October 1782, describes the staring and whispering as she passed:—‘That’s she! That’s the famous Miss Burney!’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, ii. 160. Once when Queeney ‘was consulting with a friend about a new gown and dressed hat she thought of wearing to [*sic*] an assembly, suddenly Mr. Johnson called out:—

“Wear the gown and wear the hat,

Snatch thy pleasures while they last;

Hadst thou nine lives like a cat,

Soon those nine lives would be past.”

PROZZI’S *Anecdotes*, p. 165.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 6.

³ Boswell says that when they

were at Ashbourne he talked to Johnson about the projected edition of the English Poets. He adds:—‘My friend seemed now not much to relish talking of this edition.’ *Life*, iii. 137. In Murray’s *Johnsoniana*, p. 227, it is recorded on the authority of the Rev. Mr. Parker, who had it from Mrs. Aston and her sister, that ‘a great portion of the *Lives of the Poets* was written at Stow Hill [Lichfield]. Johnson had a table by one of the windows, which was frequently surrounded by five or six ladies engaged in work or conversation. Mrs. Gastrel had a very valuable edition of Bailey’s Dictionary to which she [a misprint, no doubt, for *he*] often referred. She told him that Miss Seward said that he had made poetry of no value by his criticism. “Why, my dear lady,”

Though

Though I am still at Ashbourne, I receive your dear letters that come to Lichfield, and [do] you continue that direction, for I think to get thither as soon as I can.

One of the does died yesterday, and I am afraid her fawn will be starved; I wish Miss Thrale had it to nurse; but the Doctor is now all for cattle, and minds very little either does or hens.

How did you and your aunt part¹? Did you turn her out of doors to begin your journey? or did she leave you by her usual shortness of visits? I love to know how you go on.

I cannot but think on your kindness and my master's. Life has, upon the whole, fallen short, very short, of my early expectation: but the acquisition of such a friendship, at an age when new friendships are seldom acquired, is something better than the general course of things gives man a right to expect. I think on it with great delight, I am not very apt to be delighted.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

556.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAREST LADY,

Ashbourne, Oct. 16, 1777.

I am just going out, and can write but little. How you should be long without a letter I know not, for I seldom miss a post. I purpose now to come to London as soon as I can, for I have a deal to look after, but hope I shall get through the whole business.

I wish you had told me your adventure, or told me nothing. Be civil to Lord * * * *, he seems to be a good kind of man³. Miss may change her mind; and will change it, when she finds herself get more credit by dancing than by whist⁴; and though she should continue to like, as she likes now, the harm is none.

replied he; "if silver is dirty, it is not the less valuable for a good scouring." It is a great exaggeration to say that he wrote 'a great portion of the *Lives*' at Stow Hill.

¹ See *ante*, ii. 38.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 8.

³ Mrs. Thrale in her letter of October 1, had mentioned 'Lord * * *, who talks a great deal, and from a very fashionably furnished mind.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 392.

⁴ 'Miss Thrale never could be brought to love dancing.' BARETTI.

Do not yet begin, dear Madam, to think about *the last*¹. You may well dance these dozen years, if you keep your looks as you have yet kept them; and I am glad that Hetty² has no design to dance you down.

The poor P——³. I am sorry for the girl; she seems to be doomed, before her time, to weakness and solicitude. What is that Bedrider⁴ the supervisor? He will be up again. But life seems to be closing upon them.

I hope you still continue to be sick⁵, and my dear master to be well.

I am no sender of compliments, but take them once for all, and deliver them to be kept as rarities by Miss Owen, Mrs. Nesbit⁶, Miss Hetty, and Dr. Burney.

Still direct to Lichfield, for thither I am hastening; and from Lichfield to London, and from London I hope to Brighthelmstone, and from Brighthelmstone *qua terra patet*⁷.

I am, dearest of all dear Ladies,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

557.

TO MRS. THRALE⁸.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, October 22, 1777.

I am come, at last, to Lichfield, and am really glad that I am got away from a place where there was indeed no evil, but very little good⁹. You may, I believe, write once to Lich-

¹ Johnson refers, I think, to the passage in his last *Idler*, where he says, 'there are few things, not purely evil, of which we can say without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*.'

² Miss Thrale, whose name was Esther.

³ A Mrs. P—— has been mentioned, *ante*, ii. 36. Mrs. Thrale some years later (*Piozzi Letters*, ii. 359) speaks of poor P——'s ill state of health, where P——, I suspect, is Perkins, Thrale's clerk and successor.

⁴ *Bedrider* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*. According to Skeat (*Etymo. Dict.*), '*bedridden* is corrupted from Anglo-Saxon *bedrida*, lit. "a bed-rider;" one who can only ride on a bed, not on a horse.'

⁵ *Ante*, ii. 44, n. 7.

⁶ For Miss Owen see *ante*, ii. 5, n. 1, and for Mrs. Nesbit, *ante*, i. 221, n. 3.

⁷ Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, i. 241. Quoted *ante*, i. 226.

⁸ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 10.

⁹ He wrote to Boswell on Nov. field

field after you receive this, but after that it will be best to direct to London.

Your throat is, I suppose, well by this time. Poor Mrs. * * * it is impossible to think on without great compassion.—Against a blow so sudden, and so unexpected, I wonder that she supports herself. The consolations of * * * 's girls must indeed be painful. She had intended to enjoy the triumph of her daughter's superiority¹. They were prepared to wish them both ill, and their wishes are gratified. There is in this event a kind of system of calamity, or conflagration of the soul. Every avenue of pain is invaded at once.—Pride is mortified, tenderness is wounded, hope is disappointed.—Whither will the poor Lady run from herself?

My visit to Stowhill has been paid. I have seen there a collection of misery. Mrs. Aston paralytick, Mrs. Walmsley lame, Mrs. Hervey blind, and I think another lady deaf. Even such is life².

I hope dear Mrs. Aston is a little better; it is however very little. She was, I believe, glad to see me; and to have any body glad to see me is a great pleasure³.

I will tell, while I think on it, that I really saw with my own eyes Mr. Chaplin of Lincolnshire's letter⁴ for Taylor's cow, accompanied with a draught on Hoare for one hundred and twenty-six pounds to pay for her. Frank says, the young bull is not quite so big as the old one; Taylor, I think, says he is bigger.

I have seen but one new place this journey, and that is Leek in the Morlands⁵.—An old church, but a poor town.

25:—'I staid long at Ashbourne, not much pleased, yet awkward at departing.' *Life*, iii. 211.

¹ She is referred to again, *post*, p. 54.

² Mrs. Walmsley was the sister of Mrs. Aston, and the widow of Johnson's friend and patron, Gilbert Walmsley. Mrs. Hervey was another sister, the widow of the Hon. Henry Hervey. *Life*, i. 83, *n.* 4. Johnson wrote to Boswell:—'I went to Lichfield, where I found my friend at Stow Hill very dangerously diseased.

Such is life. Let us try to pass it well, whatever it be, for there is surely something beyond it.' *Ib.* iii. 211.

³ See *ante*, i. 316, where he says:—'I am always proud and pleased to have my company desired.'

⁴ Mr. Chaplin was, I suppose, an ancestor of the present President of the Board of Agriculture. See *ante*, i. 166, for 'the man who offered an hundred guineas for the young bull.'

⁵ It was at Leek that Johnson's father served his apprenticeship.

The days grow short, and we have frosts ; but I am in all weathers, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

558.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, October 25, 1777.

Cholmondely's story shocks me, if it be true, which I can hardly think, for I am utterly unconscious of it ; I am very sorry, and very much ashamed².

I am here for about a week longer, and then I purpose to hasten to London. How long do you stay at Brighthelmstone? Now the company is gone, why should you be the lag³? The season of brewing will soon be here, if it is not already come. We have here cold weather, and loud winds.

Miss Porter is better than is usual, and Mrs. Aston is, I hope, not worse, but she is very bad ; and being, I fancy, about sixty-eight, is it likely that she will ever be better⁴?

It is really now a long time that we have been writing and writing, and yet how small a part of our minds have we written⁵? We shall meet, I hope, soon, and talk it out.

Life, i. 37. Here the slight shock of an earthquake had been felt the night that Boswell rested there on his way to Ashbourne. *Ib.* iii. 136. In an edition of Harwood's History of Lichfield in the Bodleian Library has been inserted at p. 487 the original of the following document :—

'Leek, 3 Decmb. 1745.

To the Headborrow of Endon.

You are required imediatly [*sic*] to bring to Leek Twenty Able Horses with proper Carts under pain of Military Execution for the Service of the Prince of Wales.

'JAMES URQUHART.'

Johnson in his *Dictionary*, defining *moreland* as 'a mountainous or hilly country,' adds:—'A tract of Staffordshire is called the *Morlands*.'

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 12.

² 'Mr. Cholmondely's running away from his debtors.' BARETTI. In this Baretti is wrong ; for why should Johnson be ashamed of it? For his act of rudeness and for his apology, see *Life*, iv. 345.

³ 'Him while he past the monster blind bespoke :

What makes my ram the lag of all the flock?'

POPE'S *Homer's Odyssey*, ix. 525.

⁴ He was thinking of himself, for sixty-eight was his own age.

⁵ When Goldsmith at the Literary Club said to Johnson, "There can now be nothing new among us : we have travelled over one another's minds," Johnson seemed a little angry, and said:—"Sir, you have not travelled over *my* mind, I promise you." *Life*, iv. 183.

You

You are not yet sixty-eight, but it will come, and perhaps you may then sometimes remember me.

In the mean time, do not think to be young beyond the time; do not play Agnes¹; and do not grow old before your time, nor suffer yourself to be too soon driven from the stage². You can yet give pleasure by your appearance; show yourself therefore, and be pleased by pleasing. It is not now too soon to be wise; nor is it yet too late to be gay.

Streatham is now, I suppose, the eighth wonder of the world³; I long to see it, but do not intend to go till, as I once said before, my master, and you, and I, and nobody else shall be with us—perambulate it together.

Cicely, I warrant you, will do well enough⁴. I am glad you are so sick, and nobody to pity. Now for another pretty little girl.—But we know not what is best.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

P.S.—Pay my respects to Miss Owen.

559.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, October 27, 1777.

You talk of writing and writing, as if you had all the writing to yourself. If our correspondence were printed, I am sure posterity, for posterity is always the authour's favourite⁶, would

¹ He refers, I conjecture, to Agnès in *L'École des Femmes* by Molière.

² Pope gives different advice:—

'Walk sober off; before a sprightlier age

Comes titt'ring on, and shoves you from the stage.'

Imit. of Horace, 2 *Epis.* ii. 324.

Johnson too in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, l. 307, tells how

'New forms arise, and diff'rent views engage,

Superfluous lags the vet'ran on the stage.'

³ He is referring to Mr. Thrale's improvements. *Ante*, ii. 45.

⁴ Cecilia Thrale married John Meredith Mostyn, and died on May 1, 1857, aged 80, as is shown by her tomb-stone at Streatham.

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 14.

⁶ Goldsmith, in the Preface to his *Essays*, says:—'As my drafts are in some danger of being protested at home, it may not be imprudent upon this occasion to draw my bills upon Posterity. Mr. Posterity. Sir, nine hundred and ninety-nine years after

say that I am a good writer too.—*Anch'io sono pittore*¹. To sit down so often with nothing to say: to say something so often, almost without consciousness of saying, and without any remembrance of having said, is a power of which I will not violate my modesty by boasting, but I do not believe that every body has it.

Some, when they write to their friends, are all affection; some are wise and sententious; some strain their powers for efforts of gaiety: some write news, and some write secrets; but to make a letter without affection, without wisdom, without gaiety, without news, and without a secret, is, doubtless, the great epistolick art².

In a man's letters, you know, Madam, his soul lies naked, his letters are only the mirrour of his breast; whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process; nothing is inverted, nothing distorted; you see systems in their elements; you discover actions in their motives.

Of this great truth, sounded by the knowing to the ignorant, and so echoed by the ignorant to the knowing, what evidence have you now before you! Is not my soul laid open in these veracious pages³? Do not you see me reduced to my first

sight hereof, pay the bearer, or order, a thousand pounds' worth of praise, free from all deductions whatsoever, it being a commodity that will then be very serviceable to him, and place it to the accompt of, &c.' Goldsmith's *Works*, ed. 1801, iv. 301. Porson ends his Preface to his *Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis* by saying:—'Mr. Travis and I may address our letters to posterity; but *they will never be delivered according to the direction.*'

¹ 'It was this that made Correggio cry out on seeing Raphael's works, "I also am a painter:" he felt a kindred spirit in his own breast.' *Conversations of Northcote*, p. 168.

² *Epistolick* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

³ The motto of Howell's *Letters*

is:—'Ut clavis portam, sic pandit epistola pectus.' Johnson in the *Life of Pope* says:—'It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children. . . . There is indeed no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse.' *Works*, viii. 314.

Boswell instances *veracious* as one of 'the three uncommon or learned words' which Johnson used in the *Lives of the Poets*. *Life*, iv. 39.

principles?

principles? This is the pleasure of corresponding with a friend, where doubt and distrust have no place, and every thing is said as it is thought. The original idea is laid down in its simple purity, and all the supervenient conceptions are spread over it *stratum super stratum*, as they happen to be formed. These are the letters by which souls are united, and by which minds naturally in unison move each other as they are moved themselves. I know, dearest Lady, that in the perusal of this, such is the consanguinity of our intellects, you will be touched as I am touched. I have indeed concealed nothing from you, nor do I expect ever to repent of having thus opened my heart.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

560.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, October 29, 1777.

Though after my last letter I might justly claim an interval of rest, yet I write again to tell you, that for this turn you will hear but once more from Lichfield. This day is Wednesday, on Saturday I shall write again, and on Monday I shall set out to seek adventures; for you know,

None but the brave deserve the fair².

On Monday we hope to see Birmingham, the seat of the mechanick arts³; and know not whether our next stage will be Oxford, the mansion of the liberal arts; or London, the residence of all the arts together. The chymists call the world *Academia Paracelsi*; my ambition is to be his fellow-student—to see the works of nature, and hear the lectures of truth. To London therefore—London may perhaps fill me; and I hope to fill my part of London.

In the mean time, let me continue to keep the part which I

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 14.

² 'None but the brave *deserves* the fair.'

DRYDEN. *Alexander's Feast*.

³ 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'we are a

city of philosophers; we work with our heads, and make the boobies of Birmingham work for us with their hands.' *Life*, ii. 464.

have

have had so long in your kindness, and my master's; for if that should grow less, I know not where to find that which may supply the diminution. But I hope what I have been so happy as to gain I shall have the happiness of keeping.

I always omitted to tell you that Lucy's maid took the worm-powder with strict regularity, but with no great effect¹. Lucy has had several letters from you, but cannot prevail on herself to write; but she is very grateful.

Mrs. Walmsley has been at Stowhill, and has invited me, when I come to Bath, to be at her house. Poor Mrs. Aston either mends not at all, or not perceptibly; but she does not seem to grow worse.

I suppose * * * * * is by this time recovered, and perhaps grown wiser, than to shake his constitution so violently a second time².

Poor Mrs. * * * * *³! One cannot think on her but with great compassion. But it is impossible for her husband's daughters not to triumph; and the husband will feel, as Rochefoucault says, *something that does not displease him*⁴. You and I, who are neutral, whom her happiness could not have depressed, may be honestly sorry.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 18.

² Johnson, I think, is writing of Topham Beauclerk, whom he had seen at Brighthelmston this autumn. *Life*, iii. 210. Horace Walpole wrote on July 6, 1779:—'Lord Bolingbroke, I hear, will live. At first they thought he had taken laudanum. It would have been a monstrous injustice in opium to kill him, when it will not despatch Beauclerk.' *Letters*, vii. 221. The injustice would have consisted in the fact that his divorced wife was married to Beauclerk with whom she had first lived in adultery. For Beauclerk's ill-health, see *Life*, iii. 104.

³ *Ante*, ii. 49.

⁴ 'Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas.'

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD. *Reflexions Morales*, xcix.

'As Rochefoucault his maxims drew

From nature, I believe them true;
They argue no corrupted mind
In him; the fault is in mankind.
This maxim more than all the rest
Is thought too base for human
breast;

"In all distresses of our friends
We first consult our private ends;

To

561.

TO MRS. THRALE ¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, November 3, 1777.

This is the last time that I shall write, in this excursion, from this place. To-morrow I shall be, I hope, at Birmingham; from which place I shall do my best to find the nearest way home. I come home, I think, worse than I went; and do not like the state of my health. But, *vive hodie* ², make the most of life. I hope to get better, and—sweep the cobwebs. But I have sad nights. Mrs. Aston has sent me to Mr. Green ³ to be cured.

Did you see Foote at Brighthelmstone?—Did you think he would so soon be gone?—Life, says Falstaff, is a shuttle ⁴. He was a fine fellow in his way; and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories ⁵. Murphy ought to write his life, at least to give the world a Footeana ⁶. Now, will any of his contemporaries bewail him? Will Genius change *his sex* to weep ⁷? I would really have his life written with diligence ⁸.

While Nature kindly bent to ease
us

Points out some circumstance to
please us.”

SWIFT. *On the Death of Dr. Swift. Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 240.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, i. 398.

This letter is inserted by Mrs. Piozzi under the date of October 3. Johnson in his last letter written on Wednesday, October 29, says:—‘On Monday we hope to see Birmingham.’ Monday was November 3. This letter was therefore written in the beginning of November. I have altered the month but kept the day of the month. Probably he delayed his journey one day.

² ‘Non est, crede mihi, sapientis dicere, Vivam.

Sera nimis vita est crastina:
vive hodie.’

MARTIAL, i. 16. 11.

³ The Lichfield apothecary, and

proprietor of the Museum. *Ante*, i. 161, n. 5.

⁴ *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act v. sc. i.

⁵ Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets* applied the same thought to Garrick’s death, ‘which has,’ he said, ‘eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure.’ *Life*, i. 82.

⁶ ‘One half of it had been a string of obscenities.’ BARETTI.

⁷ See *Life*, iii. 374, where he said to a bard who made him read his *Ode to the Warlike Genius of Britain*:—‘Here is an error, Sir; you have made Genius feminine.’

⁸ Foote had died at Dover on his way to France on October 20, broken in spirit by a charge which had been brought against him, as false as it was infamous. Though it had been at once demolished when it was tried in the Court of King’s Bench, with

It

It will be proper for me to work pretty diligently now for some time. I hope to get through, though so many weeks have passed. Little lives and little criticisms may serve.

Having been in the country so long, with very little to detain me, I am rather glad to look homewards.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

562.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

[Bolt Court], November 10, 1777.

And so, supposing that I might come to town and neglect to give you notice, or thinking some other strange thought, but certainly thinking wrong, you fall to writing about me to Tom Davies², as if he could tell you any thing that I would not have you know. As soon as I came hither, I let you know of my arrival; and the consequence is, that I am summoned to Brighthelmstone through storms, and cold, and dirt, and all the hardships of wintry journies. You know my natural dread of all those evils; yet to shew my master an example of compliance, and to let you know how much I long to see you, and to boast how little I give way to disease, my purpose is to be with you on Friday.

I am sorry for poor Nezzy, and hope she will in time be better; I hope the same for myself. The rejuvenescency³ of Mr. Scrase gives us both reason to hope, and therefore both of us rejoice in his recovery. I wish him well besides, as a friend to my master.

Lord Mansfield as judge, Mrs. Piozzi persisted in believing in it. 'Dr. Johnson,' she adds, 'never could persuade himself that things were as bad as the sufferer or his friends represented them; he thought it *wrong* to believe so, and steadily made the best *out*.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 311. For an interesting account of Foote see John Forster's *Biographical Essays*, ii. 293

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 4.

This letter like the last is misdated. It was written not on October 10, but on November 10—Lord Mayor's Day, as the context shows. November 9 that year fell on a Sunday, so that the Show had been put off till the morrow.

² The bookseller of Russell Street, Covent Garden. *Life*, i. 390.

³ This word is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*. For Mr. Scrase see *ante*, i. 395, n. 2.

I am

I am just come home from not seeing my Lord Mayor's shew, but I might have seen at least part of it¹. But I saw Miss Wesley and her brothers; she sends her compliments². Mrs. Williams is come home, I think a very little better.

Every body was an enemy to that wig³.—We will burn it, and get drunk; for what is joy without drink. Wagers are laid in the city about our success, which is yet, as the French call it, problematical⁴. Well, but seriously I think I shall be glad to see you in your own hair; but do not take too much time in combing, and twisting, and papering, and unpapering, and curling, and frizzing⁵, and powdering, and getting out the powder, with all the other operations required in the cultivation of a head of hair; yet let it be combed at least once in three months, on the quarter-day—I could wish it might be combed once at least in six weeks; if I were to indulge my wishes, but what are wishes, without hopes, I should fancy the operation performed—one knows not when one has enough—perhaps every morning.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ The Lord Chancellor, when the Lord Mayor elect had been presented to him, told him 'what pleasure they must feel on a return of that dignity, peace and tranquillity, which had been lost and disturbed for many years past; and hoped that matters would return to the old channel.' *Annual Register*, 1777, i. 208. See *Life*, iii. 356, 459, for the return of the City to the old custom of appointing its Mayors by seniority.

² Southey in his *Life of Wesley* (ed. 1846), on p. 368 of vol. i. speaks of John Wesley as having only three sisters who grew up. These were all married—Mrs. Wright (*ib.* p. 378), Mrs. Whitelamb (*ib.*), and Mrs. Hall (*ante*, i. 372). He mentions, however, on p. 372 Kezia, who died unmarried at an early age. I can-

not find any mention of an unmarried sister at this time.

³ 'Madam wore a wig during many years in conformity with the Jew-women, having a great notion that in time the Jews will be again the great Favourites of God. But about this time she fell acquainted with Piozzi, who disliked a shaven poll in a woman, and that drew out of her all her Jewish notions.' BARETTI.

⁴ *Problematical* is in Johnson's *Dictionary*. Horace Walpole writing on November 13 about the reports that Washington had lost 1500 or 500 men on the 11th or the 25th, continues:—'In short, it is the House that Jack built, except that it loses a story in the hands of every new builder.' *Letters*, vii. 7.

⁵ Johnson has *to frizzle* in his *Dictionary*, but not *to frizz*.

To

563.

TO MRS. ASTON¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 20, 1777.

Through Birmingham and Oxford I got without any difficulty or disaster to London, though not in so short a time as I expected, for I did not reach Oxford before the second day. I came home very much incommoded by obstructed respiration, but by vigorous methods am something better. I have since been at Brighthelmston, and am now designing to settle.

Different things, Madam, are fit for different people. It is fit for me to settle, and for you to move. I wish I could hear of you at Bath, but I am afraid that is hardly to be expected from your resolute inactivity. My next hope is that you will endeavour to grow well where you are. I cannot help thinking that I saw a visible amendment between the time when I left you to go to Ashbourne, and the time when I came back. I hope you will go on mending and mending, to which exercise and cheerfulness will very much contribute. Take care therefore, dearest Madam, to be busy and cheerful.

I have great confidence in the care and conversation of dear Mrs. Gastrel. It is very much the interest of all that know her, that she should continue well, for she is one of few people that has the proper regard for those that are sick. She was so kind to me that I hope I never shall forget it, and if it be troublesome to you to write I shall hope that she will do me another act of kindness by answering this letter, for I beg that I may hear from you by some hand or another.

I am, Madam,

Your most obedient servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

The address, 'To Mrs. Aston, Stow Hill, Lichfield,' is in Mr. Thrale's writing, the Letter being franked by him.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, p. 565. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

To

564.

TO MRS. PORTER¹.

DEAR LOVE,

London, Nov. 20, 1777.

You ordered me to write you word when I came home. I have been for some days at Brighthelmstone, and came back on Tuesday night.

You know that when I left you I was not well; I have taken physic very diligently, and am perceptibly better; so much better that I hope by care and perseverance to recover, and see you again from time to time.

Mr. Nollekens, the statuary, has had my direction to send you a cast of my head². I will pay the carriage when we meet. Let me know how you like it; and what the ladies of your rout³ say to it. I have heard different opinions. I cannot think where you can put it.

I found every body here well. Miss⁴ has a mind to be womanly, and her womanhood does not sit well upon her. Please to make my compliments to all the ladies and all the gentlemen to whom I owe them, that is, to a great part of the town.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

565.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, November 25, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 210.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 565.

² An engraving from this bust is given in Fielding's quarto edition of the *Dictionary* and in Murray's *Johnsoniana*, p. 400. 'Johnson was very much displeased at the manner in which the head had been loaded with hair, which the sculptor insisted upon, as it made him look more like an ancient poet. It had been modelled from the flowing locks of a sturdy Irish beggar, originally a street pavior,

who, after he had sat an hour, refused to take a shilling, stating that he could have made more by begging. * * * Upon hearing the name of an eminent sculptor mentioned Johnson observed:—"Well, Sir, I think my friend Joe Nollekens can chop out a head with any of them." *Nollekens and his Times*, by J. T. Smith, i. 51.

³ Johnson does not in his *Dictionary* give *rout* in the sense in which it is used here.

⁴ Miss Thrale.

TO

566.

TO MRS. GASTRELL¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Your long silence portended no good; yet I hope the danger is not so near us as our anxiety sometimes makes us fear. Winter is indeed to all those that any distemper has enfeebled a very troublesome time, but care and caution may pass safely through it, and from Spring and Summer some relief is always to be hoped. When I came hither, I fell to taking care of myself, and by physick and opium had the constriction that obstructed my breath very suddenly removed. My nights still continue very laborious and tedious, but they do not grow worse.

I do not ask you, dear Madam, to take care of Mrs. Aston, I know how little you want any such exhortations, but I earnestly entreat her to take care of herself. Many lives are prolonged by a diligent attention to little things, and I am far from thinking it unlikely that she may grow better by degrees. However, it is her duty to try, and when we do our duty we have reason to hope.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

Dec. 27, 1777.

567.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], December 27, 1777. Published in the *Life*, iii. 214.

568.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], January 24, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 215.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 566. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

569.

TO THOMAS CADELL ¹.

SIR,

If you should obtain what Mr. Davies tells me you design to ask, the office of Bookseller and Printer to the royal Academy, I take the liberty of requesting, and I request with great earnestness, that for any thing to be printed for the Academy, you will make use [of] Mr. Allen's press in Bolt court. Mr. Allen has hitherto done the work without payment, and having so long laboured only to his loss, it is reasonable that he should at last have some profit, at least some recompense.

Mr. Allen's business is not extensive, and he will be glad of work which greater Printers do not want, nor value, and if you continue him in the employment you will confer a great favour upon,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Jan. 28, 1778.

To Mr. Cadell.

570.

To ———².

SIR,

Poor Mr. Gwyn is in great distress under the weight of the late determination against him, and has still hopes that some mitigation may be obtained. If it be true that whatever has

¹ From the original in the possession of Messrs. Puttick and Simpson of 47 Leicester Square.

Thomas Cadell was the apprentice, partner and successor of Andrew Millar. In conjunction with William Strahan he published the Histories of Robertson and Gibbon, the later editions of Hume's Works, and some of the later works of Johnson. He was not related to Sir Walter Scott's publisher, Robert Cadell of Edinburgh. Hume's *Letters to Strahan*, p. 92, n. 5.

I am informed by Mr. F. A. Eaton, Secretary to the Royal Academy, that Thomas Cadell was printer to the Royal Academy from 1778 to 1793.

Edmund Allen was 'Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt Court.' *Life*, iii. 141.

² From the original in the possession of Mr. M. M. Holloway of Hillbrow, St. Julian's Road, Streatham. First published in my edition of the *Life of Johnson*, v. 454, n. 2. See *ante*, ii. 15.

by

by his negligence been amiss, may be redressed for a sum much less than has been awarded, the remaining part ought in equity to be returned, or, what is more desirable, abated. When the money is once paid, there is little hope of getting it again.

The load is, I believe, very hard upon him ; he indulges some flattering opinions that by the influence of his academical friends it may be lightened, and will not be persuaded but that some testimony of my kindness may be beneficial. I hope he has been guilty of nothing worse than credulity, and he then certainly deserves commiseration. I never heard otherwise than that he was an honest man, and I hope that by your countenance and that of other gentlemen who favour or pity him some relief may be obtained.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt Court, Fleet Street,
Jan. 30, 1778.

571.

TO SAUNDERS WELCH.

[London], February 3, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 217.

572

TO MRS. PORTER ¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Feb. 19, 1778.

I have several little things to mention which I have hitherto neglected. You judged rightly in thinking that the bust would not please. It is condemned by Mrs. Thrale, Mrs. Reynolds, and Mrs. Garrick ; so that your disapprobation is not singular ².

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 568.

² For the bust see *ante*, ii. 59. Nollekens thought it one of his best works, and Chantrey thought it his finest work. Croker's *Boswell*, p. 568, *n.* 2. Mrs. Thrale's judgment was perhaps somewhat partial, if she

had already entered Nollekens' studio that morning, when not knowing her, he called out to Dr. Johnson who accompanied her : — "I like your picture by Sir Joshua very much. He tells me it's for Thrale, a brewer, over the water ; his wife's a sharp woman, one of the blue-stocking

These

These things have never cost me any thing, so that I do not much know the price. My bust was made for the Exhibition, and shown for honour of the artist, who is a man of reputation above any of the other sculptors. To be modelled in clay costs, I believe, twenty guineas, but the casts, when the model is made, are of no great price ; whether a guinea, or two guineas, I cannot tell.

When you complained for want of oysters, I ordered you a barrel weekly for a month ; you sent me word sooner that you had enough, but I did not countermand the rest. If you could not eat them, could you not give them away? When you want any thing, send me word. I am very poorly, and have very restless and oppressive nights, but always hope for better. Pray for me.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

573.

TO MRS. MONTAGU¹.

MADAM,

March 5, 1778.

And so you are alarmed, naughty lady²? You might know

people." "Nolly, Nolly," observed the Doctor, "I wish your maid would stop your foolish mouth with a blue-bag." *Nollekens and his Times*, i. 114. The author of this book, J. T. Smith, Keeper of the Prints, &c. in the British Museum, says :—"I remember well when I was in my eighth year Mr. Nollekens taking me to Oxford Road to see Sixteen-string Jack go to Tyburn for robbing Dr. William Bell. He was dressed in a pea-green coat, with an immense nosegay in the button-holes, which had been presented to him at St. Sepulchre's Steps, and his nankin small clothes, we were told, were tied at each knee with sixteen strings. After he had passed, and Mr. Nollekens was leading me home by the hand, I recollect his stooping down to me, and observing in a low tone of voice :—"Tom, now, my little man, if my father-in-law, Mr. Justice Welch, had been High Constable, we could have walked by the side of

the cart all the way to Tyburn." *Nollekens and his Times*, by J. T. Smith, 1828, i. 24. Welch had once been High Constable of Westminster, when he had been seen 'dressed in black, with a large wig, highly powdered, with long flowing curls, a high three-cornered hat and his black baton tipped with silver at either end, riding on a white horse to Tyburn with the malefactors.' *Ib.* p. 121. Sixteen-string Jack—John Rann—was hanged on November 30, 1774. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1774, p. 592. 'Sixteen-string Jack,' said Johnson, 'towered above the common mark.' *Life*, iii. 38. The Rev. Dr. Bell who was robbed was probably the Prebendary of Westminster mentioned *ante*, i. 118.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 569.

For Mrs. Montagu see *ante*, i. 87.

² The alarm of Johnson's illness reached Edinburgh and distressed Boswell. In one of the London that

that I was ill enough when Mr. Thrale brought you my excuse. Could you think that I missed the honour of being at (your) table for any slight reason? But you (have) too many to miss any one of us, and I am (proud) to be remembered at last. I am much better. A little cough remains, which will not confine me. To houses of great delicacy I am not willing to bring it.

Now, dear Madam, we must talk of business. Poor Davies, the bankrupt bookseller, is soliciting his friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff¹. Several of them gave him five guineas; It would be an honour to him to owe part of his relief to Mrs. Montagu.

Let me thank you, Madam, once more, for your inquiry; you have, perhaps, among your numerous train not one that values a kind word or a kind look more than,

Madam,

Yours, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

574.

TO MRS. MONTAGU².

MADAM,

March 6, 1778.

I hope Davies, who does not want wit, does not want gratitude, and then he will be almost as thankful for the bill as I am for the letter that enclosed it.

If I do not lose, what I hope always to keep, my reverence for transcendent merit, I shall continue to be with unalterable fidelity,

Madam,

Yours, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

575.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], April 23, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 277.

papers 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. *Life*, iii. 221.

¹ *Life*, iii. 223.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 570.

576.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

April 30, 1778.

Since I was fetched away from Streatham, the journal stands

thus: Saturday.—Sir J. R
 Sunday.—Mr. Hoole³.
 Monday.—Lord Lucan⁴.
 Tuesday.—Gen. Paoli⁵.
 Wednesday.—Mr. Ramsay.
 Thursday.—Old Bailey⁶.
 Friday.—Club⁷.
 Saturday.—Sir J. R⁸.
 Sunday.—Lady Lucan⁹.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 18.

April 30, the day on which Johnson wrote, was a Thursday.

² Sir Joshua Reynolds. See *Life*, iii. 317, for an account of the dinner.

³ *Life*, ii. 289, n. 2.

⁴ 'At the house of Lord and Lady Lucan Johnson often enjoyed all that an elegant table and the best company can contribute to happiness.' *Life*, iv. 326.

⁵ See *ib.* iii. 324 for an account of this dinner and p. 331 for an account of the dinner at Mr. Allan Ramsay's.

⁶ 'The dinner at the Old Bailey,' says Mr. Croker, 'is one given during the Sessions to the judges, counsel, and a few guests. The venerable Mr. Clarke, Chamberlain of London, who died in 1831, in his ninety-third year, told me that he remembered having taken Johnson to this dinner, he being then sheriff. The judges were Blackstone and Eyre. Mr. Justice Blackstone conversed with Johnson on the subject of their absent friend, Sir Robert Chambers.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 610, n. 1. 'The Sessions which began on Wednesday last, April 29, at the Old Bailey, ended on Tuesday, May 5, when

fourteen convicts received sentence of death.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1778, p. 235.

⁷ Boswell wrote on April 4, 1775 :— 'I dine, Friday, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard-street, with our Club, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c., who now dine once a month, and sup every Friday. *Letters of Boswell*, p. 186. He was not there this Friday.

⁸ At this dinner, says Boswell, 'there were several people by no means of the Johnsonian School, so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour; and upon some imaginary offence from me, he attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week; and, perhaps, might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled.' *Life*, iii. 337. For the reconciliation see *ib.* p. 338.

⁹ 'Lady Spencer,' said Samuel

Monday.

Monday.—Pray let it be Streatham, and very early; do now let it be very early. For I may be carried away—just like Ganymede of Troy.

I hope my master grows well, and my mistress continues bad¹. I am afraid the ladies will be gone, and I shall say,

She's gone, and never knew how much I lov'd her.

Do now let me know whether you will send for me—early—on Monday. But take some care, or your letter will not come till Tuesday.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

577.

TO MAURITIUS LOWE².

SIR,

[London, (?) May 15, 1778.]

I spoke at the Exhibition to Sir Joshua and Mr. Garrick, and found them both cold enough. Mr. Garrick, however, seemed to relent, and I think you have reason to expect something from him; but he must be tenderly handled. I have just, however, received what will please and gratify you. I have sent it just as it came. Write to return thanks.

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Mr. Lowe, Hedge Lane.

Rogers, 'recollected Johnson well, as she used to see him often in her girlhood. Her mother, Lady Lucan, would say, "Nobody dines with us to-day; therefore, child, we'll go and get Dr. Johnson." So they would drive to Bolt Court and bring the doctor home with them.' Rogers's *Table Talk*, p. 10.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 44, n. 7.

² First published in the *Examiner* for May 24, 1873, by Mr. G. Turreff of Aberdeen, who had been shown the original of this and others of Johnson's letters by Lowe's daughter, Johnson's god-child. The letter is wrongly dated by him 1782. Garrick,

who is mentioned, died in January 1779. It was probably written on May 15, 1778, as is shown by a letter in the *Garrick Correspondence*, ii. 306, in which Lowe on that day acknowledges the receipt from Garrick of ten pounds. It was very likely that sum which Johnson sent on 'just as it came.'

A fortnight or so earlier, when driving with Boswell, 'Johnson stopped first at the bottom of Hedge Lane, into which he went to leave a letter, "with good news for a poor man in distress," as he told me.' *Life*, iii. 324. For an account of Lowe see *Life*, iii. 380; iv. 201.

TO

578.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, July 3, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 362.

579.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN.

London, July 27, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 364.

580.

SIR, TO JAMES ELPHINSTON¹.

Having myself suffered what you are now suffering, I well know the weight of your distress, how much need you have of comfort, and how little comfort can be given. A loss such as yours lacerates the mind, and breaks the whole system of purposes and hopes. It leaves a dismal vacuity in life, which affords nothing on which the affections can fix, or to which endeavour may be directed. All this I have known, and it is now, in the vicissitude of things, your turn to know it².

But in the condition of mortal beings, one must lose another. What would be the wretchedness of life, if there was not something always in view, some Being immutable and unfailing, to whose mercy man may have recourse. Τὸν πρῶτον κινῶντα ἀκίνητον³.

Here we must rest. The greatest Being is the most benevolent. We must not grieve for the dead as men without hope⁴,

¹ First published in *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Johnson*, London, 1785, page 168.

For Elphinston see *ante*, i. 17.

² Eighteen months later Johnson wrote to his friend Dr. Lawrence who had just lost his wife :—‘ He that outlives a wife whom he has long loved, sees himself disjoined from the only mind that has the same hopes, and fears, and interest ; from the only companion with whom he has shared much good or evil ; and with whom he could set his mind at liberty, to

retrace the past or anticipate the future. The continuity of being is lacerated ; the settled course of sentiment and action is stopped ; and life stands suspended and motionless, till it is driven by external causes into a new channel. But the time of suspense is dreadful.’ *Life*, iii. 419. See also *ante*, i. 383.

³ ‘Εστὶ γὰρ τι ὃ ἀεὶ κινεῖ τὰ κινούμενα καὶ τὸ πρῶτον κινῶν ἀκίνητον αὐτό.’ Aristotle, *Metaph.* iii. 8 *sub finem*.

⁴ 1 *Thessalonians*, iv. 13.

because we know that they are in his hands. We have indeed not leisure to grieve long, because we are hastening to follow them. Your race and mine have been interrupted by many obstacles, but we must humbly hope for an happy end.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

July 27, 1778.

SAM: JOHNSON.

581.

SIR,

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

You have now all *Cowley*. I have been drawn to a great length, but Cowley or Waller never had any critical examination before. I am very far advanced in *Dryden*, who will be long too. The next great life I purpose to be *Milton's*².

It will be kind if you will gather the Lives of *Denham*, *Butler*, and *Waller*, and bind them in half binding in a small volume, and let me have it to shew my Friends, as soon as may be. I sincerely hope the press shall stand no more.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

July 27, 1778.

To Mr. Nichols.

582.

SIR,

TO JOHN NICHOLS³.

August, 1778.

You have now the life of *Dryden* and you see it is very long. You must however have an appendix.

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 9.

This is the first of a series of letters written to John Nichols, printer, editor, and author, while the *Lives of the Poets* were going through the press. Most of these letters were published by Nichols in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1785, p. 9) of which he was editor. Some of them Boswell inserted in a note in the *Life*, iv. 36. The originals are in the British

Museum. From them I have supplied some omissions.

Johnson had once thought of publishing an edition of Cowley. *Ib.* iii. 29. 'His *Life of Cowley* he considered as the best of the whole.' *Ib.* iv. 38.

² 'Milton's *Life* was begun in January, 1779, and finished in six weeks.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 9, n. 1.

³ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, page 9.

The

1. The invocation to the Georgicks from Milbourne¹ (this in the small print).
2. Dryden's remarks on Rymer, which are nearly transcribed².
3. Dryden's letter from Lambeth, which is promised me³.

I am,

Sir, &c.,

[SAM: JOHNSON.]

To Mr. Nichols.

583.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

October 15, 1778.

You that are among all the wits, delighting and delighted, have little need of entertainment from me, whom you left at home unregarded and unpitied, to shift in a world to which you have made me so much a stranger; yet I know you will pretend to be angry if I do not write a letter, which, when you know the hand, you will perhaps lay aside to be read when you are dressing to-morrow; and which, when you have read it, if that time ever comes, you will throw away into the drawer and say—stuff!

As to Dr. Collier's epitaph, Nollekens has had it so long, that I have forgotten how long. You never had it. So you may set the S——s at defiance⁵.

¹ 'The invocation before the *Georgicks* is here inserted from Mr. Milbourne's version, that, according to his own proposal, his verses may be compared with those which he censures.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 348.

² These remarks were written by Dryden on the blank leaves of Rymer's *Remarks on the Tragedies of the last Age*. Johnson had had them copied from the original, which was in Garrick's possession. *Ib.* p. 350.

³ *Ib.* p. 358.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 20.

⁵ The death of Dr. Arthur Collier of Doctors Commons on May 23, 1777, is recorded in the *Gentleman's*

Magazine for that year, p. 248. He had been a constant guest at the house of Lady Salusbury, where Mrs. Thrale had passed much of her girlhood. Speaking of her suitors she says:—'It was my sport to mimic some, and drive others back, in order to make Dr. Collier laugh, who did not perhaps *wish* to see me give a heart away which he held completely in his hand, since he kindly became my preceptor in Latin, logic, rhetoric, &c.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 250. 'The S——s,' she says, means 'the Streatfield,' forgetful of the final *s*. She accused Miss Streatfield 'of endeavouring to supplant her in the esteem of Mr. Thrale;' and adds

There

There is a print of Mrs. Montague, and I shall think myself very ill rewarded for my love and admiration if she does not give me one¹; she will give it nobody in whom it will excite more respectful sentiments. But I never could get any thing from her but by pushing a face; and so, if you please, you may tell her.

I hope you let Miss S——² know how safe you keep her book. It was too fine for a scholar's talons. I hope she gets books that she may handle with more freedom, and understand with less difficulty. Do not let her forget me.

When I called the other day at Burney's, I found only the young ones at home; at last came the Doctor and Madam, from a dinner in the country, to tell how they had been robbed as they returned. The Doctor saved his purse, but gave them three guineas and some silver, of which they returned him three-and-sixpence, unasked, to pay the turnpike³.

I have sat twice to Sir Joshua, and he seems to like his own performance. He has projected another, in which I am to be busy⁴; but we can think on it at leisure.

Mrs. Williams is come home better, and the habitation is all concord and harmony; only Mr. Levet harbours discontent.

With Dr. Lawrence's consent, I have, for the two last nights,

'that she was very dangerous indeed both from her beauty and learning.' *Ib.* p. 297. See also *ib.* ii. 329, and Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 203, for an account of this young lady.

¹ See *post*, Letter of March 18, 1779, where Johnson says:—'I called for the print, and got good words.' He had in his dining-room, he said, 'portraits of some very respectable people.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 41. In the *Auction Catalogue* of his Library the last lot is a print of Mrs. Montagu, framed and glazed.

² Probably Miss Streatfield, who had read the first eight books of Homer. Johnson said of her that 'taking away her Greek she was as ignorant as a butterfly.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 221.

³ James Grainger, the author of

the *Sugar Cane*, wrote to Dr. Percy on March 24, 1764:—'I was robbed about 3 o'clock of the Day we parted, about three miles on this side St. Albans. Luckily he did not ask for my watch, and went off by telling me he was sorry to take our money. So civil are our Highwaymen. In France or Spain our death would have preceded the robbery.' Messrs. Sotheby's *Auction Catalogue* for November 27, 1889. Lot 75.

⁴ Mr. Taylor is inclined to think that the former of these two pictures is the one which is now in the Common Room of Pembroke College, Oxford, and the latter the picture in which Johnson holds a book close to his eyes. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 223.

taken musk ; the first night was a worse night than common, the second a better, but not so much better as that I dare ascribe any virtue to the medicine. I took a scruple each time.

Now Miss has seen the camp, I think she should write me some account of it. A camp, however familiarly we may speak of it, is one of the great scenes of human life¹. War and peace divide the business of the world. Camps are the habitations of those who conquer kingdoms, or defend them.

But what are wits, and pictures, and camps, and physick ? There is still a nearer concern to most of us.—Is my master come to himself ? Does he talk, and walk, and look about him, as if there were yet something in the world for which it is worth while to live ? Or does he yet sit and say nothing² ? He was mending before he went, and surely he has not relapsed. To grieve for evils is often wrong ; but it is much more wrong to grieve without them. All sorrow that lasts longer than its cause is morbid, and should be shaken off as an attack of melancholy, as the forerunner of a greater evil than poverty or pain.

I never said with Dr. Dodd that *I love to prattle upon paper*, but I have prattled now till the paper will not hold much more than my good wishes, which I sincerely send you.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

584.

TO THOMAS CADELL.

[London], October 17, 1778.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue for May 10, 1875, Lot 96 is 'a Letter of Johnson to Mr. Cadell, one page quarto, dated October 17, 1778. Apologises for the delay in returning the proof sheets, mentioning those of the *Life of Dryden*.'

It was sold for £5 2s. 6d.

¹ In the alarm of a French invasion the militia had been called out. Bennet Langton, as a Captain in the Lincolnshire Militia, was this month encamped on Warley Common. *Life*, iii. 365. Lord Chesterfield said that 'Courts and Camps are the only

places to learn the world in.' *Letters to his Son*, i. 276.

² 'The poor man could never subdue his grief on account of his son's death.'—BARETTI. The following summer he had an attack of apoplexy. *Post*, p. 94.

585.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST LADY,

London, October 24, 1778.

I have written Miss such a long letter², that I cannot tell how soon I shall be weary of writing another, having made no new discoveries since my last, either in art or nature, which may not be kept till we see each other ; and sure that time is not far off. The Duchess is a good Duchess for courting you while she stays, and for not staying to court you, till my courtship loses all its value. You are there as I would have you, except your humours. When my master grows well, must you take your turn to be melancholy? You appear to me to be now floating on the springtide of prosperity ; on a tide not governed by the moon, but as the moon governs your heads ; on a tide therefore which is never likely to ebb but by your own faults. I think it very probably in your power to lay up eight thousand pounds a-year for every year to come, encreasing all the time, what needs not be encreased, the splendour of all external appearance³. And surely such a state is not to be put into yearly hazard for the pleasure of *keeping the house full*, or the ambition of *out-brewing Whitbread*⁴. Stop now and you are safe—stop a few years and you may go safely on hereafter, if to go on shall seem worth the while.

I am sorry for Mrs. * * * * ; we never could make any thing of the lawyer, when we had him among us. * * * * has got some vanity in her head. Vanity always oversets a lady's judgment. I have not told, unless it be Williams, and I do not know that I have told her. If Streatfield has a little kindness for me, I am glad. I call now and then on the Burneys, where you are at the top of mortality.—When will you come home ?

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 24.

² 'Miss Thrale refused to give up that and some other letters the doctor wrote her when her mother applied to her for them.'—BARETTI.

³ Yet on July 3 of this year he had

written to Boswell:—'Mr. Thrale dislikes the times like the rest of us.' *Life*, iii. 363.

⁴ 'Which was Thrale's only ambition.'—BARETTI. See *ante*, ii. 23.

Two days ago Dr. Lawrence ordered a new medicine, which I think to try to-night, but my hopes are not high. I mean to try however, and not languish without resistance.

Young Desmoulins ¹ is taken in *an under something* of Drury-lane; he knows not, I believe, his own denomination.

My two clerical friends, Darby and Worthington, have both died this month ². I have known Worthington long, and to die is dreadful. I believe he was a very good man.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

586.

TO MRS. THRALE ³.

DEAR MADAM,

October 31, 1778.

Your letter seemed very long a-coming, and was very welcome at last; do not be so long again.

Long live Sir John Shelly ⁴, that lures my master to hunt. I hope he will soon shake off the black dog ⁵, and come home as light as a feather. And long live Mrs. G——, that downs ⁶ my mistress. I hope she will come home as flexible as a rush. I see my wish is rather ambiguous, it is to my mistress that I wish flexibility. As to the imitation imputed to Mrs. G——, if she makes any thing like a copy, her powers of imitation are very

¹ He was the son of Mrs. Desmoulins (*ante*, i. 6, n. 3), and the grandson of Johnson's god-father Dr. Swinfen. He had one famous day in his life. At Johnson's funeral he rode in the same carriage as Burke and Windham. See list of the persons at the funeral in the British Museum, *Add. MSS.* 33,498.

² 'October 6, 1778. Dr. William Worthington, sen., of Llanrhadr, Denbighshire, Prebendary of St. Asaph. The Rev. John Derby, Rector of Southfleet and Longfield in Kent. He was editor of Bishop Pearce's posthumous works.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1778, p. 495. In 1774 Johnson and the Thrales had

visited Dr. Worthington at Llanrhadr. *Life*, v. 453. Derby, not Darby, was the name of Johnson's other friend.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 26.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 44.

⁵ Johnson uses the same expression of Thrale, *post*, p. 76; of himself, *post*, Letter of June 28, 1783, and of Boswell, *Life*, iii. 414. Mrs. Thrale replied to Johnson from Brighton:—'My master swims now, and forgets the black dog.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 33.

⁶ See *Life*, iii. 335, where Johnson said:—'Robertson was in a mighty romantic humour, he talked of one whom he did not know; but I downed him with the King of Prussia.'

great,

great, for I do not remember that she ever saw me but once. If she copies me she will lose more credit by want of judgment than she will gain by quickness of apprehension.

Of Mrs. B——¹ I have no remembrance ; perhaps her voice is low.

Miss * * * * is just gone from me. I told her how you took to them all ; but told her likewise how you took to Miss * * * *. All poisons have their antidotes.

Sir Joshua has finished my picture, and it seems to please every body, but I shall wait to see how it pleases you.

Of your conditions of happiness, do not set your heart upon any but what Providence puts in your own power. Your debts² you may pay—much you may lay up. The rest you can only pray for. Of your daughters, three are out of the danger of children's distempers, the other two have hardly yet tried whether they can live or no. You ought not yet to count them among your settled possessions.

Is it true that Mrs. D——³ is *enceinte* ? It will give her great influence.

To-day Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulines had a scold, and Williams was going away, but I bid her *not turn tail*, and she came back, and rather got the upper hand⁴.

I wish you would come back again to us all ; you will find nobody among your fine ladies that will love you as you are loved by,

Dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Perhaps Mrs. Byron. *Post*, p. 79.

² See *ante*, i. 192, n. 3.

³ Perhaps the Mrs. D—— mentioned *ante*, i. 333.

⁴ For the inmates of Johnson's house see *Life*, iii. 368, 461. J. Cradock said that 'he once accompanied Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens to Marylebone Gardens to see *La Serva Padrona* performed. Steevens, being quite weary of the Burletta,

exclaimed :—"There is no plot, it is merely an old fellow cheated and deluded by his servant ; it is quite foolish and unnatural." Johnson instantly replied :—"Sir, it is not unnatural ; it is a scene that is acted in my family every day in my life." This did not allude to the maid-servant so much as to the two distressed ladies who were always quarrelling.' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.*, ix. 779.

587.

TO CAPTAIN LANGTON.

[London], October 31, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 365.

588.

TO THE REVEREND DR. WHEELER.

London, November 2, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 376.

589.

TO THE REVEREND DR. EDWARDS.

London, November 2, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 367.

590.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Nov. 9, 1778.

The Lord Mayor has had a dismal day.—Will not this weather drive you home? Perhaps you know not any body that will be glad to see you. I hope our well will yield water again, and something fuller you will find the pond; but then all the trees are naked, and the ground damp—but the year must go round.

While you are away I take great delight in your letters, only when you talk so much of obligations to me, you should consider how much you put me into the condition of *honest Joseph*².

Young Desmoulines thinks he has got something, he knows not what, at Drury-lane; his mother talks little of it.—Sure it is not a *hum*³? Mr. Levet, who thinks his ancient rights invaded, stands at bay, *fierce as ten furies*⁴. Mrs. Williams growls and scolds, but Poll⁵ does not much flinch. Every body is in want.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 28.

² Johnson refers to Joseph Leman in *Clarissa*, who wrote to Lovelace:—‘Be pleased howsoever, if it like your honner, not to call me *honest Joseph*, and *honest Joseph* so often. For althoff I think myself verry honest and all that, yet I am touched a littel, for fear I should not do the quite right thing; and too besides your honner has such a

fessessious way with you, as that I hardly know whether you are in jest or earnest, when your honner calls me *honest* so often.’ *Clarissa*, ed. 1810, ii. 370.

³ A hoax. Not in Johnson’s *Dictionary*.

⁴ *Paradise Lost*, ii. 671.

⁵ A Miss Carmichael whom he had taken in. *Life*, iii. 222, 368.

I shall

I shall be glad to see Streatham again, but I can find no reason for going to Brighthelmstone, but that of seeing my master and you three days sooner.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

591.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST MADAM,

Nov. 14, 1778.

Then I really think I shall be very glad to see you all safe at home. I shall easily forgive my master his long stay, if he leaves the dog behind him. We will watch, as well as we can, that the dog shall never be let in again, for when he comes the first thing he does is to worry my master. This time he gnawed him to the bone. Content, said Rider's almanack², makes a man richer than the Indies. But surely he that has the Indies in his possession, may without very much philosophy make himself content. So much for my master and his dog, a vile one it is, but I hope if he is not hanged he is drowned; with another lusty shake he will pick my master's heart out.

I have begun to take valerian; the two last nights I took an ounce each night—a very loathsome quantity. Dr. Lawrence talked of a decoction, but I say, all or nothing. The first night I thought myself better, but the next it did me no good.

Young Desmoulines says, he is settled at a weekly pay of twenty-five shillings, about forty pounds a-year³. Mr. Macbean

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 37.

² *Rider's British Merlin* began in 1655 and ended in 1840. A few months after the date of Johnson's letter Lord North brought in a Bill to vest the sole right of printing Almanacks in the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Company of Stationers. Their supposed exclusive patent had been recently certified void by the Court of Common Pleas. Erskine, speaking at the Bar of the House against the Bill, said:—'It is notorious that the Universities sell their right to the Stationers' Company, who make a scandalous

job of the bargain, and, to increase the sale among the vulgar, publish under the auspices of religion and learning, the most senseless absurdities. I should have been glad to cite some sentences from the 113th edition of *Poor Robin's Almanack*, published under the revision of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. But I know no house—but a brothel—that could suffer the quotation.' The Bill was lost. *Parl. Hist.*, xx. 608.

³ No doubt Drury Lane Theatre at which he was engaged was closed many weeks each year.

has

has no business¹. We have tolerable concord at home, but no love. Williams hates every body. Levett hates Desmoulines, and does not love Williams. Desmoulines hates them both. Poll loves none of them.

Dr. Burney had the luck to go to Oxford the only week in the year when the library is shut up. He was however very kindly treated; as one man is translating Arabick, and another Welsh, for his service². Murphy told me that you wrote to him about *Evelina*. *Francis* wants to read it³.

¹ *Ante*, i. 319, and *post*, p. 81.

² Burney was seeking materials for a *History of Music*. The two introductions which Johnson gave him were dated November 2. *Life*, iii. 366. By the Statutes of 1768 the Library was opened every day but Sundays, Christmas Day, and the other great festivals of the Church, and the days appointed for the inspection of the Library by the Curators. At this period the inspection was held once a year—on November 8. *Corpus Statutorum Universitatis Oxoniensis*, 1768. Appendix, pp. 10, 18. The custom had apparently arisen of closing the Library for a week beforehand for the sake of preparing for the great day. This custom was sanctioned by the Statutes of 1813. At the present time it is closed for cleaning the first week of October, and for inspection on November 7 and 8; for Good Friday and Easter Eve, Ascension Day, Commemoration Day, and from Christmas Day to January 1. 'In 1713 every stranger admitted to read in the Library had to pay nine shillings in fees.' Macray's *Annals of the Bodleian*, ed. 1890, p. 185. Apparently the fees were the same at the time of Dr. Burney's visit. The Rev. John Price was Librarian at this time. In 1787 Dr. Beddoes, the Reader in Chemistry, in a Memorial to the Curators charged

him with 'discouraging readers by neglect and incivility.' The copy of Cook's *Voyages*, which had been presented by the King, he had lent to the Rector of Lincoln College, 'telling him that the longer he kept it the better, "for if it was known to be in the Library he should be perpetually plagued with enquiries after it."' *Ib.* p. 269. How much the Library was neglected in those days is shown by the fact that the present year (1891) it possesses for the first time a copy of Johnson's edition of the *English Poets*; neither has it an earlier edition of the *Lives* than the one of 1805.

Dr. Radcliffe's Library was in a state of even greater neglect. On the death of Johnson's friend, Dr. Kennicott, Canon of Christ Church and Radclivian Librarian, a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1783 (p. 718) says:—'There are several chests of books unopened. The late learned Orientalist in this respect only trod in the steps of his predecessor, but it is high time a different track should be pursued. If the librarianship must be given to a person too *old* or too *easy* for the employment, something decent might be spared out of near £400 a year to a young man of genius and learning to act as deputy, and open to public inspection one of the first collections in the universe.'

³ Miss Burney's *Evelina* had been published in January of this year.

And

And on the 26th Burney is to bring me. Pray why so? Is it not as fit that I should bring Burney¹? My master is in his old lunes², and so am I. Well, I do not much care how it is, and yet—at it again.

Pray make my compliments to Mr. Scrase³. He has many things which I wish to have, his knowledge of business and of the law. He has likewise a great chair⁴. Such an one my Master talked of getting; but that vile black dog——

Mrs. Queeney might write to me, and do herself no harm; she will neglect me till I shall take to Susy⁵, and then Queeney may break her heart, and who can be blamed? I am sure I stuck to Queeney as long as I could.

Does not Master talk how full his canal⁶ will be when he comes home. Now or never. I know not how the soil was laid; if it slopes towards the canal, it may pour in a great deal of water, but I suspect it slopes the wrong way.

This is but the fourteenth day; there are twelve more to the twenty-sixth. Did you ever hear of notching a stick? however we have it in Horace—*truditur dies die*⁷; as twelve days have gone, twelve days will come.

Hector of Birmingham just looked in at me. He is come to his only niece, who is ill of a cancer; I believe with very little hope, for it is knotted in two places.

I think at least I grow no worse; perhaps valerian may make me better. Let me have your prayers.

I am, dearest Lady,

Yours, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 37. Francis was Johnson's black servant.

¹ 'See how touchy was Johnson! He thought himself degraded by the phrase *Burney shall bring you here on the 26th*.' BARETTI.

² 'Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again.' *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act iv. sc. 2.

³ *Ante*, i. 395.

⁴ Johnson with his asthma would

often find comfort in a great chair.

⁵ 'I was always a Susy when nobody else was a Susy.' *Ante*, ii. 44.

⁶ *Canal* was generally used of an ornamental piece of water. What we now call a canal was at this time often called a *navigation*, whence comes *navvy*.

⁷ HORACE. 2 *Odes* xviii. 15.

'Day presses on the heels of day.'

FRANCIS.

TO

592.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Nov. 21, 1778.

I will write to you once more before you come away; but—*nil mihi rescribas*²—I hope soon to see you. Burney and I have settled it; and I will not take a post-chaise, merely to shew my independence.

Now the dog is drowned³, I shall see both you and my master just as you are used to be, and with your being as you have been, your friends may very reasonably be satisfied.—Only, be better if you can.

Return my thanks, if you please, to Queeney for her letter. I do not yet design to leave her for Susy; but how near is the time when she will leave me, and leave me to Susy, or any body else that will pick me up.

—Currit enim ferox
Ætas, et illi, quos tibi demserit,
Apponet annos.—⁴

Queeney, whom you watched while I held her, will soon think our care of her very superfluous.

Miss Biron, and, I suppose, Mrs. Biron, is gone⁵. You are by this time left alone to wander over the Steine⁶, and listen to the waves.—This is but a dull life. Come away and be busy, and count your poultry, and look into your dairy, and at leisure hours learn what revolutions have happened at Streatham.

I believe I told you that Jack Desmoulines is rated upon the book at Drury-lane five-and-twenty shillings a-week.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 40.

² 'Nil mihi rescribas; attamen ipse veni.'

OVID. *Heroides*, i. 2.

³ *Ante*, ii. 73, n. 5.

⁴ HORACE. 2 *Odes*, v. 13.

'Time to her shall count each day

Which from you it takes away.'

FRANCIS.

⁵ In the Letter of November 2, 1779, Johnson correctly writes these ladies' name *Byron*. Mrs. Byron

was the wife of Admiral Byron and grandmother of the poet. Miss Byron was her daughter Augusta. See Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 331, 383, and *post*, Letters of November 4, 1779, and November 12, 1781.

⁶ Mrs. Thrale writing from Brighton on July 19, 1780, says:—'My master is gone out riding, and we are to drink tea with Lady Rothes; after which the Steyne hours begin, and we cluster round Thomas's shop.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 417.

Baretti has told his musical scheme to B——¹, and B——
will neither grant the question nor deny. He is of opinion, that
if it does not fail it will succeed, but if it does not succeed he
conceives it must fail.

¹ It is good to speak dubiously about futurity. It is likewise
not amiss to hope.

Did I ever tell you that * * * * was married? It so fell out,
that * * * * fell in love with a girl whose fortune was so small
that he perhaps could not mention it to his father; but it
happened likewise, by the lottery of love, that the father liked
her so well, as himself to recommend her to * * * *. Such
coincidence is rare.

Come now, do come home as fast as you can :

Come with a whoop, come with a call,
Come with a good will, or come not at all.

I am, &c.,
SAM: JOHNSON.

593.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], November 21, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 368.

594.

TO JOHN NICHOLS².

Mr. Johnson will hope for Mr. Nichols' company to tea about
six this afternoon, to talk of the index, and settle the terms.

Monday.

¹ 'Burney. The musical scheme
was the *Carmen Seculare*, that
brought me £150 in three nights,
and three times as much to Philidor,
whom I got to set it to music. It
would have benefited us both, if
Philidor had not proved a scoundrel,
greatly more than those sums.'
BARETTI. 'The *Carmen Seculare*
of Horace had this year been set to
musick, and performed as a pub-

lick entertainment in London, for the
joint benefit of Monsieur Philidor
and Signor Baretti.' *Life*, iii. 373.
Philidor was famous as a chess-
player. He came to England in
1771 with an introduction to Dr.
Burney from Diderot. *The Early
Diary of Frances Burney*, i. 116.

² First published in the *Gentle-
man's Magazine* for 1785, p. 9.

TO

595.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

SIR,

I am very well contented that the Index is settled, for though the price is low, it is not penurious.

Mr. Macbean having been for some time out of business, is in some little perplexities from which twelve guineas will set him free. This, we hope, you will advance, and during the continuance of the work subject to your inspection he desires a weekly payment of sixteen shillings, the rest to remain till it is completed.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Nov. 26, 1778.

596.

TO THE HONOURABLE THOMAS FITZMAURICE².

SIR,

Good wishes are the necessary consequence of friendship, and of my good wishes, I hope, you make no doubt. But now

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, part i. page 9.

Macbean made a useful Index to the English Poets, giving what he calls 'a synoptical view of them' in several particulars. It fills the last two volumes of the Collection. In the Preface to the Index in the edition of 1790 it is stated that the original plan had received Johnson's sanction. For Macbean see *ante*, i. 319.

² From the original in the possession of the Reverend Canon Moor, St. Clement's near Truro.

There is no address to this Letter; I have however no doubt that it was written to the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice, the younger brother of the Earl of Shelburne. On December 21, 1777, he had married Mary, afterwards Countess of Orkney in her own right;

their only son was born on October 2, 1778. *Ann. Reg.*, 1778, i. 218, and Burke's *Peerage* under LANS-DOWNE and ORKNEY. Lady Shelburne was the Dowager Lady, who died in December, 1780. Horace Walpole writes:—'How has she left her fortune, once so great, but which with superabundant cunning she had rendered almost as crazy as she was latterly?' *Letters*, vii. 475. The first wife of the Earl had died on January 5, 1771, he married his second wife in 1779. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 47, and Burke's *Peerage*. Fitzmaurice was living in Llewene Hall, which, according to Mrs. Piozzi, 'had been in possession of the Salusburys a thousand years.' *Life*, v. 435. He invited Johnson to pass part of the summer of 1780 with him there. *Post*, Letter of May 7, 1780.

you have a son I know not well what more to wish you except more sons, and a few daughters; the sons to be all brave and the daughters all beautiful, and both sons and daughters to be wise and good.

Now you have a son what can you want? You have a mother to rejoice in her grandson, and a Lady to partake in all your felicities. With Lady Shelburn I once had the honour of conversing, and entreat you, Sir, to let her know that I have not forgotten it; to your Lady I am a stranger, but who can doubt the excellence of her, who [*sic*] you have chosen, and who has chosen you?

If encrease of happiness cannot be expected it still remains to wish the continuance, and very long it will continue, if there be any power in the desires of,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Dec. 7, 1778.

597.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[London], December, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iv. 36, *n.* 4.

598.

TO THE REVEREND JOHN HUSSEY.

[London], December 29, 1778. Published in the *Life*, iii. 369.

599.

TO MRS. ASTON¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Now the new year is come of which I wish you and dear Mrs. Gastrel many and many returns, it is fit that I give you some account of the year past. In the beginning of it I had difficulty of breathing, and other illness [*sic*], from which however I by degrees recovered and from which I am now tolerably free. In the spring and summer I flattered myself that I should come

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 622. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

to Lichfield, and forebore to write till I could tell of my intentions with some certainty, and, one thing or other making the journey always improper, as I did not come, I omitted to write, till at last I grew afraid of hearing ill news. But the other day Mr. Prujean¹ called, and left word that you, dear Madam, are grown better, I know not when I heard any thing that pleased me so much. I shall now long more and more to see Lichfield, and partake the happiness of your recovery.

Now you begin to mend, you have great encouragement to take care of yourself, do not omit any thing that can conduce to your health, and when I come I shall hope to enjoy with you and dearest Mrs. Gastrel many pleasing hours. Do not be angry at my long omission to write, but let me hear how you both do, for you will write to nobody to whom your welfare will give more pleasure than to,

Dearest Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

Jan. 2, 1779.

600.

TO MRS. PORTER².

DEAREST LOVE,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Jan. 2, 1779.

Though I have so long omitted to write, I will omit it no longer. I hope the new year finds you not worse than you have formerly been; and I wish that many years may pass over you without bringing either pain or discontent. For my part, I think my health, though not good, yet rather better than when I left you.

My purpose was to have paid you my annual visit in the summer, but it happened otherwise, not by any journey another way, for I have never been many miles from London, but by such hindrances as it is hard to bring to any account.

Do not follow my bad example, but write to me soon again, and let me know of you what you have to tell; I hope it is all good.

¹ 'He married the youngest of the Misses Aston.' CROKER.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 622.

Please to make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Adey, and Miss Adey, and all the ladies and gentlemen that frequent your mansion.

If you want any books, or any thing else that I can send you, let me know.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

601.

TO MRS. GARRICK ¹.

Dr. Johnson sends most respectful condolence to Mrs. Garrick, and wishes that any endeavour of his could enable her [*sic*] support a loss which the world cannot repair.

Feb. 2, 1779.

602.

TO MISS REYNOLDS ².

DEAREST MADAM,

[Streatham], Feb. 15, 1779.

I have never deserved to be treated as you treat me. When

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. Edward Ford, Old Park, Enfield. Garrick died on January 20. Johnson's note was written the day after the funeral. 'I saw,' writes Cumberland, 'old Samuel Johnson standing beside Garrick's grave, at the foot of Shakespeare's monument, and bathed in tears.' Cumberland's *Memoirs*, ii. 210. 'Garrick's widow is buried in the same grave. She survived him forty-three years—"a little bowed-down old woman, who went about leaning on a gold-headed cane, dressed in deep widow's mourning, and always talking of her dear Davy." (*Pen and Ink Sketches*, 1864).' Stanley's *Westminster Abbey*, ed. 1868, p. 305.

Captain Alfred C. Christopher of the Seaforth Highlanders has given me the following note made by his

ancestor, Sir Henry Wilmot Seton, who died in 1848. 'I saw Mrs. Garrick on her ninetieth birthday, and by her express permission kissed her. Her words, pronounced with all the grace and dignity of a Royal Command, were "Kiss me."'

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 623.

This letter probably refers to that 'small degree of coolness' which for some time existed between Miss Reynolds and her brother. 'Dr. Johnson,' says Northcote, 'participated with her in her troubles, and offered to write a letter himself, which when copied should pass as her own. It began thus:—"I am well aware that complaints are always odious, but complain I must." She saw that the intended deception would no more have passed with Sir Joshua than if Johnson had attired you

you employed me before, I undertook your affair and succeeded, but then I succeeded by choosing a proper time, and a proper time I will try to choose again.

I have about a week's work to do, and then I shall come to live in town, and will first wait on you in Dover-street¹. You are not to think that I neglect you, for your nieces² will tell you how rarely they have seen me. I will wait on you as soon as I can, and yet you must resolve to talk things over without anger, and you must leave me to catch opportunities; and be assured, dearest dear, that I should have very little enjoyment of that day in which I had neglected any opportunity of doing good to you.

I am, dearest Madam,
Your humble servant,
SAM: JOHNSON.

603.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[London], March 1, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iv. 36, n. 4.

604.

TO MRS. ASTON³.

DEAR MADAM,

Mrs. Gastrell and You are very often in my thoughts, though

himself in her cap and gown, and endeavoured to impose his identical person upon him as his sister.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, i. 203. Reynolds had had built for himself 'a chariot, on the panels of which were painted the seasons of the year in allegorical figures. The wheels were ornamented with carved foliage and gilding. He insisted on it that his sister should go out with it as much as possible, and let it be seen in the streets to make a show, which she was much averse to, being a person of great shyness of disposition. This anecdote, Northcote says, 'he had from her own mouth.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 183. See also

ib. p. 91, n. 2, and *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 331.

¹ Miss Reynolds lodged in the house of Hoole, the translator of *Ariosto*. Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 91, n. 2. Perhaps he lived in Dover Street.

² 'Sir Joshua's nieces, the Miss Palmers, the elder afterwards Marchioness of Thomond, the younger Mrs. Gwatkin, lived with him occasionally, and one of them afterwards habitually.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, i. 332.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 623. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

I do

I do not write so often as might be expected from so much love and so much respect. I please myself with thinking that I shall see you again, and shall find you better. But futurity is uncertain, poor David¹ had doubtless many futurities in his head, which death has intercepted, a death, I believe, totally unexpected; he did not in his last hour seem to think his Life in danger.

My old complaints hang heavy on me, and my nights are very uncomfortable and unquiet; and sleepless nights make heavy days. I think to go to my Physician, and try what can be done. For why should not I grow better as well as you?

Now you are better, pray, dearest Madam, take care of yourself. I hope to come this Summer and watch you. It will be a very pleasant journey if I can find you and dear Mrs. Gastrel well. I sent you two barels [*sic*] of oysters. If you would wish for more, please to send your commands to,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt-court, March 4, 1779.

SAM: JOHNSON.

605.

TO MRS. PORTER².

MY DEAR LOVE,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, March 4, 1779.

Since I heard from you, I sent you a little print, and two barrels of oysters, and I shall have some little books to send you soon³. I have seen Mr. Pearson⁴, and am pleased to find that he has got a living. I was hurried when he was with me, but had time to hear that my friends were all well.

¹ David Garrick. 'He had,' writes Davies, 'so little apprehension of death being so near that, I am well informed, he said to the servant who gave him a draught a day or two before he died, "Well, Tom, I shall do very well yet, and make you amends for all this trouble."' Davies's *Life of Garrick*, ii. 353.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 623.

³ No doubt the first four volumes

of the *Lives of the Poets* which were published this spring.

⁴ The Rev. John B. Pearson was Perpetual Curate of St. Michael's Church from 1774 to 1782. Harwood's *Lichfield*, p. 517. He must have received this year some other preferment. He was Lucy Porter's legatee. From his widow Mr. Croker received copies of many of Johnson's letters to his step-daughter. Croker's *Boswell*, Preface, p. xiv.

Poor Mrs. Adey¹ was, I think, a good woman, and therefore her death is less to be lamented; but it is not pleasant to think how uncertain it is, that, when friends part, they will ever meet again. My old complaint of flatulence, and tight and short breath, oppress me heavily. My nights are very restless. I think of consulting the doctor to-morrow.

This has been a mild winter, for which I hope you have been the better. Take what care you can of yourself, and do not forget to drink². I was somehow or other hindered from coming into the country last summer, but I think of coming this year.

I am, dear love,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

606.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

[Bolt Court], March 10, 1779.

And so, dear Madam, it is a mumm⁴ to see who will speak first. I will come to see you on Saturday, only let me know whether I must come to the Borough, or am to be taken up here.

Baretti's golden dream is now but silver. He is of my mind; he says, there is no money for diversions⁵. But we make another onset on Friday, and this is to be the last time this season.

I got my Lives, not yet quite printed, put neatly together, and sent them to the King; what he says of them I know not. If the King is a Whig, he will not like them; but is any king a Whig⁶?

¹ *Ante*, i. 139.

² *Ante*, i. 368, n. 1.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 42.

⁴ This, like 'a humm' of *ante*, ii. 75, is 'a cant word' not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

⁵ See *ante*, ii. 80, n. 1. There was great distress owing to the heavy taxation caused by the American War. Horace Walpole wrote on February 25:—'It was but yesterday Lord North could tell the House

he had got the money on the loan, and is happy to get it under eight per cent.' *Letters*, vii. 181.

⁶ It was the first four of the ten volumes which Johnson sent to the King. Horace Walpole says that four years earlier George III 'had sent for Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands* in MS., and then wondering said, "I protest, Johnson seems to be a Papist and a Jacobite!"' *Letters*, vi. 179.

So far had I gone, when in came Mr. Thrale, who will have the honour of bringing it.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

607.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], March 13, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 372.

608.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

March 18, 1779.

There is some comfort in writing, when such praise is to be had. Plato is a multitude².

On Monday I came late to Mrs. Vesey³. Mrs. Montague was there; I called for the print⁴, and got good words. The evening was not brilliant, but I had thanks for my company. The night was troublesome. On Tuesday I fasted, and went to the Doctor; he ordered bleeding. On Wednesday I had the teapot, fasted, and was blooded. Wednesday night was better. To-day I have dined at Mr. Strahan's at Islington⁵, with his new wife. To-night

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 43.

² *Ante*, i. 374.

³ Hannah More, in 1783 (*Memoirs*, i. 286), describes 'Mrs. Vesey's pleasant parties. It is a select society which meets at her house every other Tuesday, on the day on which the Turk's Head Club dine together. In the evening they all meet at Mrs. Vesey's, with the addition of such other company as it is difficult to find elsewhere.' Miss More addressed to her *The Bas Bleu* which begins:—

'Vesey! of verse the judge and friend,

Awhile my idle strain attend.'

See *Life*, iii. 424, for an account of the brilliant company which one evening at her house gathered four or five deep round Johnson's chair.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 70.

⁵ The Rev. George Strahan, Vicar of Islington (*ante*, i. 95). 'His house afforded Johnson an agreeable change of place and fresh air.' *Life*, iv. 416. Lamb, in a Sonnet written seventeen years later, says:—

'I turn my back on thy detested walls,
Proud City, and thy sons I leave behind.

* * * *

I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire.

That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,

Of merriest days, of Love and Islington,

Kindling anew the flames of past desire;

there

there will be opium. To-morrow the teapot. Then heigh for Saturday. I wish the Doctor would bleed me again. Yet every body that I meet says that I look better than when I was last met.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

609.

TO THOMAS CADELL¹.

SIR,

The Duty of Man is not the right. Nelson is bound in Sheepskin, a thing I never saw before. I was bred a Bookseller, and have not forgotten my trade².

Do not let us teize one another about books. That they are lent about I suppose is true, but it must be principally by those that have bought them, which would have been done much less, if you had united every writer's life to his works, for then the borrower might have carried away near twenty volumes, whereas he now takes but four. I will venture to say that of those which I have given very few are lent. But be that as it may, you must supply me with what I think it proper to distribute among my friends³.

And I shall muse on thee, slow
journeying on,

To the green plains of pleasant
Hertfordshire.

Ainger's *Letters of Charles Lamb*,
i. 4. See also *ib.* ii. 82.

The Old Vicarage was pulled down about 1885; its site is occupied by the premises of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. *The Academy*, Jan. 5, 1889, p. 2.

¹ From the original in the possession of Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, 47 Leicester Square, London.

For Thomas Cadell see *ante*, ii. 61, n. 1, and *Life*, ii. 425, n. 2.

² 'Nelson' is no doubt Robert Nelson's *Festivals and Fasts*. Johnson, in the two years which he spent at home after he left school

and before he went to Oxford, was partly employed in his father's shop. 'I have heard him say,' writes Hawkins, 'that he was able to bind a book.' *Life*, i. 56, n. 2. It was said in 1819 that 'books of his binding are still extant in Lichfield.' Murray's *Johnsoniana*, p. 465.

³ Cadell, it seems, had complained that the copies of the first four volumes of the *Lives of the Poets* which Johnson had given to his friends had been lent about, and so the sale had been hindered. Johnson replies, 'had you not printed the *Lives* separately the borrowers—who borrowed mostly from those who bought the books—must have carried away near twenty volumes. This would have rendered borrowing

Let

Let me have no dispute about it. I think myself not well used.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

April 3, 1779.

To Mr. Cadel.

610.

To JAMES BOSWELL.

Harley Street, [April 26, 1779]. Published in the *Life*, iii. 391.

611.

To JOHN NICHOLS.

[London], May 2, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iv. 36, *n.* 4.

The date of this Letter, in which Johnson mentions Hughes's Letters, is in the original, but not in Boswell.

612.

To THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY.

[London], May 3, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 394.

613.

To MRS. ASTON¹.

DEAR MADAM,

May 4, 1779.

When I sent you the little books², I was not sure that you were well enough to take the trouble of reading them, but have lately heard from Mr. Greeves that you are much recovered. I hope you will gain more and more strength, and live many and many years, and I shall come again to Stowhill, and live as I used to do, with you and dear Mrs. Gastrell.

much more inconvenient.' Considering 'his extraordinary moderation' in the payment which he had demanded for writing the *Lives* (*Life*, iii. 111, *n.* 1), this complaint of Cadell's is pitiful.

¹ First published in Croker's *Bos-*

well, page 631, where it is stated that the original is in Pembroke College. Probably the statement was incorrect; at all events the Letter is not there now.

² No doubt the first four volumes of the *Lives*.

I am

I am not well: my nights are very troublesome, and my breath is short; but I know not that it grows much worse. I wish to see you. Mrs. Harvey¹ has just sent to me to dine with her, and I have promised to wait on her to-morrow.

Mr. Green comes home loaded with curiosities², and will be able to give his friends new entertainment. When I come, it will be great entertainment to me if I can find you and Mrs. Gastrell well, and willing to receive me.

I am,

Dearest Madam, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

614.

TO MRS. PORTER.

[London], May 4, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 393.

615.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

May 20, 1779.

The vicissitudes of things, and the eddies of life, are now carrying you southward, and me northward⁴. When shall we meet again?

I must beg of you to send Mr. Watson's papers to my house, directed for him, and sealed up. I know not whether he does not think himself in danger of piracy⁵.

Take care that Susy sees all that Sophy has seen, that she may tell her travels, and give them a taste of the world. And take

¹ Most likely Mrs. Hervey, Mrs. Aston's sister. *Ante*, i. 182.

² For his Museum at Lichfield.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 44.

⁴ He was going to Lichfield and Ashbourne, she to Brighton. Miss Burney wrote from that town on May 26:—'Mr., Mrs., Miss Thrale, and Miss Susan Thrale and I travelled in a coach with four horses, and two of the servants in a chaise, besides two men on horseback. Mr.

Thrale's house is in West Street, which is the Court end of the town.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 209.

⁵ Mr. Watson was probably Professor Watson of Aberdeen, whose History of Philip II Johnson had offered to revise. *Ante*, i. 412. The last volume was published this year. The piracy which was feared was, I suppose, that of piratical publishers, such as those of Dublin.

care,

care, and write to me very often, till we meet again; and keep Master in good thoughts of me.—*Vale*.

SAM: JOHNSON.

616.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

Lichfield, May 29, 1779.

I have now been here a week, and will try to give you my journal, or such parts of it as are fit in my mind for communication.

On Friday.—We set out about twelve, and lay at Daventry².

On Saturday.—We dined with Mr. Rann at Coventry. He intercepted us at the town's end. I saw Tom Johnson³, who had hardly life to know that I was with him. I hear he is since dead. In the evening I came to Lucy, and walked to Stowhill; Mrs. Aston was gone or going to bed; I did not see her.

Sunday.—After dinner I went to Stowhill, and was very kindly received. At night I saw my old friend Brodhurst⁴—you know him—the play-fellow of my infancy, and gave him a guinea.

Monday.—Dr. Taylor came, and we went with Mrs. Cobb to Greenhill Bower. I had not seen it perhaps for fifty years. It is much degenerated⁵. Every thing grows old. Taylor is to fetch me next Saturday.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 45.

² Seventy-two miles from London. Falstaff with his soldiers had taken the same road, when the one shirt in all his company was 'stolen from my host at Saint Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry.' 1 *Henry IV*, Act iv. sc. 2. He would not go with his men the rest of the road. 'I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat.' Coventry was 19 miles from Daventry, and Lichfield 25½ miles from Coventry.

³ *Ante*, i. 154.

⁴ I find no other mention of him.

⁵ 'A Court is held by the Bailiffs on Whit Monday in the Guild Hall, which is immediately adjourned to an open mount called Green Hill (at which time also a Court Leet is held), when the names of all the householders of the twenty-one wards of the City are called over, as owing suit and service to this Court. It was anciently called The Court of Array, or View of Men and Arms. Processions are made by the Constables and Dozeners [*ante*, i. 162, *n.* 3] of each ward, who anciently bore tutelary saints, but which are now converted into garlands or em-

Mr. Green

Mr. Green came to see us, and I ordered some physick.

Tuesday.—Physick, and a little company. I dined, I think, with Lucy both Monday and Tuesday.

Wednesday. } I had a few visits, from Peter Garrick¹ among

Thursday. } the rest, and dined at Stowhill. My breath very short.

Friday.—I dined at Stowhill. I have taken physick four days together.

Saturday.—Mrs. Aston took me out in her chaise, and was very kind. I dined with Mrs. Cobb, and came to Lucy, with whom I found, as I had done the first day, Lady Smith and Miss Vyse².

This is the course of my life. You do not think it much makes me forget Streatham. However it is good to wander a little, lest one should dream that all the world was Streatham, of which one may venture to say, *none but itself can be its parallel*³.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

617.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, June 14, 1779.

Your account of Mr. Thrale's illness is very terrible ; but when

blems of their trade. They are attended by Morice dancers, who dance sarabands &c., in imitation of the Moors, and on the following day beg for money. During the day the inhabitants of the wards are regaled with cold meat, cake and wine at the expense of the Corporation.' Harwood's *History of Lichfield*, p. 352.

¹ *Ante*, i. 4, n. 5.

² Lady Smith is mentioned, *ante*, i. 329, and Miss Vyse, *ante*, i. 334.

³ 'None but thyself can be thy parallel' is from Theobald's *Double Falsehood*. Pope calls it 'a marvellous line,' and thus introduces it in *The Dunciad*, first edition, iii. 271:—

'For works like these let deathless Journals tell,

"None but thyself can be thy parallel."

In *Martinus Scriblerus*, ch. vii, it is suggested that 'it is borrowed from the thought of that master of a show in Smithfield, who writ in large letters over the picture of his elephant:—"This is the greatest Elephant in the world except Himself." Warton says in a note that 'this line of Theobald, which is thought to be the masterpiece of absurdity, is evidently copied from a line of Seneca in the *Hercules Furens*:—

"Quaeris Alcidae parem?

Nemo est nisi Ipse."

Warton's *Pope's Works*, vi. 208.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 47.

I remember

I remember that he seems to have it peculiar to his constitution, that whatever distemper he has, he always has his head affected, I am less frightened. The seizure was, I think, not apoplectical¹, but hysterical, and therefore not dangerous to life. I would have you however consult such physicians as you think you can best trust. Bromfield seems to have done well, and by his practice appears not to suspect an apoplexy². That is a solid and fundamental comfort. I remember Dr. Marsigli³, an Italian physician, whose seizure was more violent than Mr. Thrale's, for he fell down helpless, but his case was not considered as of much danger, and he went safe home, and is now a professor at Padua. His fit was considered as only hysterical.

I hope Sir Philip⁴, who franked your letter, comforts you as well as Mr. Seward. If I can comfort you, I will come to

¹ 'He was mistaken; it was a downright apoplectic fit. That, which was but the second, he got over, but died soon after of a fourth fit.' BARETTI. Mrs. Piozzi in a marginal note says:—'I was sitting in the drawing-room when my servant Sam opened the door with *un air effaré* saying:—"My master is come home, but there is something amiss." I started up, and saw a tall black female figure who cried, "Don't go into the library: don't go in I say." My rushing by her somewhat rudely was all her prohibition gained; but there sate Mrs. Nesbitt holding her brother's hand, who, I perceived, knew not a syllable of what was passing.' She adds that 'he had dropped as if lifeless from the dinner-table at Mrs. Nesbitt's house, and had been brought five or six miles out of town in that condition' without being seen by a doctor. Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 299. Miss Burney wrote a day or two later:—"At dinner everybody tried to be cheerful; but a dark and gloomy cloud hangs over the head of poor Mr. Thrale, which no flashes of merriment or beams of wit can pierce

through; yet he seems pleased that everybody should be gay.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 220.

² 'Dr. Bromfield of Gerrard Street, my old accoucheur,' writes Mrs. Piozzi. 'He convinced me it was an apoplectic seizure.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 300. See *ante*, i. 178, n. 6.

³ He was in England in 1757. *Life*, i. 322.

⁴ Sir Philip Jennings Clerk. *Life*, iv. 80. Mr. Thrale was, no doubt, too ill to frank his wife's letter. She seems however to have been in the habit of imitating his writing, for in a letter to Johnson dated May 16, 1776, she says:—'I'll make Mr. Thrale frank this letter *himself* [the italics are hers] for a fancy.' On this Baretti says in a marginal note:—'She franked for Mr. Thrale.' *Piozzi Letters*, i. 332. If she did so she was guilty of felony, and liable to transportation for seven years. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1764, p. 184. In the summer assizes at Exeter in 1783, 'a young gentleman' was sentenced to transportation for this offence. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 708.

you

you, but I hope you are now no longer in want of any help to be happy.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

The Doctor¹ sends his compliments; he is one of the people that are growing old.

618.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, June 14, 1779.

How near we all are to extreme danger. We are merry or sad, or busy or idle, and forget that death is hovering over us. You are a dear lady for writing again. The case, as you now describe it, is worse than I conceived it when I read your first letter. It is still however not apoplectick, but seems to have something worse than hysterical, a tendency to a palsy, which I hope however is now over. I am glad that you have Heberden³, and hope we are all safer. I am the more alarmed by this violent seizure, as I can impute it to no wrong practices, or intemperance of any kind⁴, and therefore know not how any

¹ Dr. Taylor.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 49.

³ 'Johnson on being asked in his last illness what physician he had sent for, "Dr. Heberden," replied he, "*ultimus Romanorum*, the last of the learned physicians."' Seward's *Biographiana*, p. 601. An interesting Memoir of Heberden was published in 1879 by Mr. A. C. Buller. Great though Heberden's learning was, in one matter he acted in a manner unworthy of a scholar. Hearing that a publisher had offered Dr. Middleton's widow £150 for an unpublished work of her husband's, entitled *The Inefficacy of Prayer*, he gave her £200, and destroyed the manuscript. *Life and Works of Heberden*, p. 14. Perhaps it was partly on account of this action that Cowper addressed him as 'virtuous and faithful Heber-

den.' Cowper's *Poems*, ed. 1786, i. 272.

⁴ 'The mere grief he could not overcome of his only son's loss. Johnson knew it, but would not tell it.' BARETTI. Mrs. Thrale recorded in her *Diary* soon after his seizure: — 'Few people live in such a state of preparation for eternity, I think, as my dear master has done since I have been connected with him; regular in his public and private devotions, constant at the Sacrament, temperate in his appetites, moderate in his passions—he has less to apprehend from a sudden summons than any man I have known who was young and gay, and high in health and fortune like him.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 29. After his attack, when his mind perhaps was weakened, he indulged too much in eating. See *post*, p. 97, n. 2, and *Life*, defence

defence or preservative can be obtained. Mr. Thrale has certainly less exercise than when he followed the foxes, but he is very far from unwieldiness or inactivity, and further still from any vicious or dangerous excess. I fancy, however, he will do well to ride more.

Do, dear Madam, let me know every post how he goes on. Such sudden violence is very dreadful; we know not by what it is let loose upon us, nor by what its effects are limited.

If my coming can either assist or divert, or be useful to any purpose, let me but know. I will soon be with you.

Mrs. Kennedy, Queeney's Baucis, ended last week a long life of disease and poverty¹. She had been married about fifty years.

Dr. Taylor is not much amiss, but always complaining.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

P.S. Direct the next to Lichfield.

619.

TO HENRY THRALE².

DEAR SIR,

June 15, 1779.

Though I wrote yesterday to my mistress, I cannot forbear writing immediately to you, my sincere congratulation upon your recovery from so much disorder, and your escape from so much danger. I should have had a very heavy part in the misfortune of losing you, for it is not likely that I should ever find such another friend³, and proportionate at least to my fear must be my pleasure.

iii. 422, where Mrs. Thrale writes to Johnson:—'Mr. Thrale looks well enough, but I have no notion of health for a man whose mouth cannot be sewed up.' Miss Burney, after describing in May 1779, 'a very grand dinner,' adds that 'it was nothing to a Streatham dinner.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 211.

¹ Miss Thrale had visited Lichfield in 1774. *Life*, v. 428. Baucis's hut is described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, viii. 630, as

'Parva quidem, stipulis et canna
tecta palustri.'

Perhaps Queeney had read Swift's *Baucis and Philemon*; she might however have read the original, for Johnson gave her Latin lessons. *Post*, p. 98, n. 2.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 57.

This letter is wrongly dated July 15. It was no doubt written the day after the letter to Mrs. Thrale of June 14.

³ *Post*, Letter of April 5, 1781.

As

As I know not that you brought this disease upon yourself by any irregularity, I have no advice to give you. I can only wish, and I wish it sincerely, that you may live long and happily, and long count among those that love you best, dear Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

620.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, June 17, 1779.

It is certain that your first letter did not alarm me in proportion to the danger, for indeed it did not describe the danger as it was. I am glad that you have Heberden, and hope his restoratives and his preservatives will both be effectual. In the preservatives dear Mr. Thrale must concur; yet what can he reform? or what can he add to his regularity and temperance²? He can only sleep less³. We will do, however, all we can. I go to Lichfield to-morrow, with intent to hasten to Streatham.

Both Mrs. Aston and Dr. Taylor have had strokes of the palsy. The Lady was sixty-eight, and at that age has gained ground upon it; the Doctor is, you know, not young, and he is quite well, only suspicious of every sensation in the peccant arm. I hope my dear master's case is yet slighter, and that as his age is less, his recovery will be more perfect. Let him keep his thoughts diverted, and his mind easy⁴.

I am, dearest and dearest,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 51.

² Mrs. Piozzi said that after this attack 'Mr. Thrale's natural disposition to conviviality degenerated into a preternatural desire for food.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 300. Baretti says that 'Dr. Johnson knew that Thrale would eat like four, let physicians preach. May be he did not know it, so little did he mind what people were doing. Though he sat by Thrale at dinner he never noticed whether he

eat much or little. A strange man!'

³ Mme. D'Arblay mentions his 'immoderate sleep after meals. Dr. Johnson,' she adds, 'was so little aware of the insalubrity of his course of life that he often laughingly said, "Mr. Thrale will out-sleep the Seven Sleepers."' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 206.

⁴ 'That was impossible: his lost son was always uppermost in his mind.' BARETTI.

621.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, June 19, 1779.

Whether it was that your description of dear Mr. Thrale's disorder was indistinct, or that I am not ready at guessing calamity, I certainly did not know our danger—our danger, for sure I have a part in it, till that danger was abated.

I am glad that Dr. Heberden, and that you perceive so plainly his recovery. He certainly will not be without any warning that I can give him against pernicious practices. His proportion of sleep, if he slept in the night, was doubtless very uncommon; but I do not think that he slept himself into a palsy. But perhaps a lethargick is likewise a paralytical disposition. We will watch him as well as we can. I have known a man, who had a stroke like this, die forty years afterward without another. I hope we have now nothing to fear, or no more than is unalterably involved in the life of man.

I begin now to let loose my mind after Queeney and Burney². I hope they are both well. It will not be long before I shall be among you; and it is a very great degree of pleasure to hope that I shall be welcome.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

622.

TO HENRY THRALE³.

DEAR SIR,

Lichfield, June 23, 1779.

To shew you how well I think of your health, I have sent

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 52.

² Burney is Miss Burney. 'They were,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'learning Latin of him; but Dr. Burney would not let *his* girl go on: he thought grammar too masculine a study for misses.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 317. Miss Burney writing on July 20 of this year says:—'Dr. Johnson gives us a Latin lesson every morning. What progress we may make in this

most learned scheme I know not; but, as I have always told you, I am sure I fag more for fear of disgrace than for hope of profit.' In December, 1780, she wrote:—'Miss Thrale and I renewed our Latin exercises with Dr. Johnson, and with great *éclat* of praise.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 243, 427.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 54.

you an hundred pounds to keep for me. It will come within one day of quarter day, and that day you must give me¹. I came by it in a very uncommon manner, and would not confound it with the rest².

My wicked mistress talks as if she thought it possible for me to be indifferent or negligent about your health or hers. If I could have done any good, I had not delayed an hour to come to you, and I will come very soon to try if my advice can be of any use, or my company of any entertainment.

What can be done you must do for yourself; do not let any uneasy thought settle in your mind. Cheerfulness and exercise are your great remedies. Nothing is for the present worth your anxiety. *Vivite laeti* is one of the great rules of health³. I believe it will be good to ride often, but never to weariness, for weariness is itself a temporary resolution of the nerves, and is therefore to be avoided⁴. Labour is exercise continued to fatigue—exercise is labour used only while it produces pleasure.

Above all, keep your mind quiet, do not think with earnestness even of your health, but think on such things as may please without too much agitation; among which I hope is, dear Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

623.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

[Lichfield], June 24, 1779.

Though I wrote yesterday to Mr. Thrale, I think I must write

¹ Quarter Day was the 24th. Johnson, I think, means to say that the hundred pounds will reach Mr. Thrale on the 25th, but that he must pay interest on it for the whole quarter as if he had received it on the 24th.

² See *post*, Letter of March 5, 1781, where he says that he had received one hundred pounds as part payment of the sum due for the *Lives*. It is possible that it was this sum that he would not confound with the rest.

³ 'Mr. Burke once admirably counselled a grave and anxious

gentleman, "live pleasant." *Life*, i. 344. Perhaps Johnson had seen the motto round the picture of Hacket, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry:—'*Inservi Deo et latere.*'

⁴ See *post*, p. 102, where Johnson writes:—'I take the true definition of exercise to be labour without weariness.' *Resolution* Johnson uses in a sense which he does not give in his *Dictionary*; though he comes near to it when he defines it as *dissolution*, and instances 'the resolution of humidity congealed.'

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 55.

this day to you; and I hope this will be the last letter, for I am coming up as fast as I can; but to go down cost me seven guineas¹, and I am loth to come back at the same charge.

You really do not use me well in thinking that I am in less pain on this occasion than I ought to be. There is nobody left for me to care about but you and my master, and I have now for many years known the value of his friendship, and the importance of his life, too well not to have him very near my heart. I did not at first understand his danger, and when I knew it, I was told likewise that it was over—and over I hope it is for ever. I have known a man seized in the same manner, who, though very irregular and intemperate, was never seized again. Do what you can, however, to keep my master cheerful, and slightly busy, till his health is confirmed; and if we can be sure of that, let Mr. Perkins² go to Ireland and come back as opportunity offers, or necessity requires, and keep yourself airy, and be a *funny little thing*³.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

624.

TO MISS REYNOLDS⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 27, 1779.

I have sent what I can for your German friend. At this time it is very difficult to get any money, and I cannot give much⁵.

I am, Madam,

Your most affectionate

and most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

625.

TO CHARLES DILLY.

[London, July 13, 1779.] Published in the *Life*, iii. 394.

¹ *Ante*, i. 328, n. 1.

² The superintendant of Mr. Thrale's Brewery and his successor.

³ *Funny* is no doubt a misprint for *sunny*. The words are, I suspect, a quotation. One day 'on Mrs. Thrale appearing before him in a dark-coloured gown he said, "You little creatures should never wear those

sort of clothes, however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?"' *Life*, i. 495.

⁴ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 632.

⁵ For the difficulty of getting money see *ante*, ii. 87, n. 5.

626.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], July 13, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 395.

627.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

Since my return hither I have applied myself very diligently to the care of my health. My nights grew better at your house, and have never since been bad ; but my breath was very much obstructed ; yet I have at last got it tolerably free. This has not been done without great efforts ; of the last fifty days I have taken mercurial physick, I believe, forty, and have lived with much less animal food than has been my custom of late².

From this account you may, I think, derive hope and comfort. I am older than you, my disorders had been of very long continuance, and if it should please God that this recovery is lasting, you have reason to expect an abatement of all the pains that encumber your life.

Mr. Thrale has felt a very heavy blow. He was for some time without reason, and, I think, without utterance. Heberden was in great doubt whether his powers of mind would ever return. He has however perfectly recovered all his faculties and all his vigour³. He has a fontanel⁴ in his back. I make little doubt but that, notwithstanding your dismal prognostication, you may see one another again.

He purposes this autumn to spend some time in hunting on

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 461.

² Miss Burney had written five days earlier to Mr. Crisp :—' I fear you are not so steady in your intended reformation as to diet and exercise as you proposed being. Dr. Johnson has made resolutions exactly similar to yours, and in general adheres to them with strictness ; but the old Adam, as you say, stands in his

way as well as in his neighbours'. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 245.

³ ' Mr. Thrale is as well as ever he was in health, though the alarming and terrible blow he so lately received has, I fear, given a damp to his spirits that will scarce ever be wholly conquered. Yet he grows daily rather more cheerful.' *Ib.*

⁴ ' An issue ; a discharge opened in the body.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

the

the downs of Sussex. I hope you are diligent to take as much exercise as you can bear. I had rather you rode twice a day than tired yourself in the morning. I take the true definition of exercise to be labour without weariness¹.

When I left you, there hung over you a cloud of discontent which is I hope dispersed. Drive it away as fast as you can. Sadness only multiplies self. Let us do our duty, and be cheerful.

Dear Sir, your humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

August 3, 1779.

To the Rev^d Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

628.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Streatham, September 9, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 396.

629.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Monday, Oct. 4, 1779.

I had intended to send you such a card as I have inclosed, when I was alarmed by hearing that my servant had told in the house, for servants never tell their masters, his opinion—that for the two last days Mr. Thrale was visibly worse. His eyes are keen, and his attention upon such occasions vigorous enough.

I therefore earnestly wish, that before you set out, even though you should lose a day, you would go together to Heberden, and see what advice he will give you. In this doubtful pendulous state of the distemper, advice may do much; and physicians, be their powers less or more, are the only refuge that we have in sickness³. I wish you would do yet more, and propose to Heberden a consultation with some other of the doctors; and if Lawrence is at present fit for business⁴, I wish he might be called, but call somebody. As you make yourselves of more importance, you will be more considered. Do not go away with

¹ *Ante*, ii. 99.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 58.

³ Johnson's piety here seems to slumber.

⁴ Perhaps he had had the first attacks of the palsy which three years later made him unable to write. *Life*, iv. 144, n. 3.

any reason to tax yourselves with negligence. You are in a state in which nothing that can be done ought to be omitted. We now do right or wrong for a great stake. You may send the children and nurses forward to-morrow, and go yourselves on Wednesday¹. Little things must not now be minded, and least of all must you mind a little money. What the world has is to be sold, and to be enjoyed by those that will pay its price. Do not give Heberden a single guinea, and subscribe a hundred to keep out the French²; we have an invasion more formidable, and an enemy less resistible by power, and less avoidable by flight. I have now done my duty.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

630.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Oct. 5, 1779.

When Mr. Boswell⁴ waited on Mr. Thrale in Southwark, I directed him to watch all appearances with close attention, and bring me his observations. At his return he told me, that without previous intelligence he should not have discovered that Mr. Thrale had been lately ill.

It appears to me that Mr. Thrale's disorder, whether grumous or serous⁵, must be cured by bleeding; and I would not have him begin a course of exercise without considerable evacuation⁶.

¹ They were going to Tunbridge Wells.

² Adolphus in his *History of England*, iii. 158, writing of this year when we were at war with the United States, France and Spain, says:—'Individuals and public bodies entered into large subscriptions for raising troops, giving bounties to seamen, and equipping privateers.' Johnson ridiculed the fears of an invasion. *Post*, p. 109.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 60.

⁴ Boswell, who had made a sudden journey to London, had called at

Johnson's house the morning before and found him in bed. 'He called briskly, "Frank, go and get coffee, and let us breakfast in splendour."' *Life*, iii. 400. Unfortunately Boswell was very indolent in keeping his Journal this visit.

⁵ *Grumous* Johnson defines as 'thick, clotted'; *serous* as 'thin, watery; used of the part of the blood which separates in congelation from the grumous or red part.'

⁶ Johnson had written to Boswell on September 9:—'Mr. Thrale goes to Brighthelmstone about Michaelmas

To

To encrease the force of the blood, unless it be first diluted and attenuated, may be dangerous. But the case is too important for my theory.

The weakness in my ankles left them for a day, but has now turned to a pain in my toe, much like that at Brighthelmstone. It is not bad, nor much more than troublesome; I hope it will not be greater, nor last long.

You all go with the good wishes of, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

631

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Oct. 8, 1779.

I begin to be frighted at your omission to write; do not torment me any longer, but let me know where you are, how you got thither, how you live there, and every thing else that one friend loves to know of another.

I will show you the way.

On Sunday the gout left my ankles, and I went very commodiously to Church. On Monday night I felt my feet uneasy. On Tuesday I was quite lame. That night I took an opiate, having first taken physick and fasted. Towards morning on Wednesday the pain remitted.—Bozzy came to me, and much talk we had². I fasted another day; and on Wednesday night could walk tolerably. On Thursday, finding myself mending, I ventured on my dinner, which I think has a little interrupted my convalescence. To-day I have again taken physick, and eaten only some stewed apples. I hope to starve it away. It is now no worse than it was at Brighthelmstone.

This, Madam, is the history of one of my toes; the history of my head would perhaps be much shorter. I thought it was the

to be jolly and ride a hunting.' *Life*, iii. 397. For Johnson's 'dabbling in physic' see *Life*, iii. 152.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 61.

² Boswell has no record of this day. He says, as he was accustomed

to say when he was indolent with his Journal: — 'During this visit to London I had several interviews with Dr. Johnson, which it is unnecessary to distinguish particularly.' *Life*, iii. 400.

gout on Saturday. It has already lost me two dinners abroad, but then I have not been at much more charges, for I have eaten little at home.

Surely I shall have a letter to-morrow.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

632.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Oct. 11, 1779.

I thought it very long till I heard from you, having sent a second letter to Tunbridge, which I believe you cannot have received². I do not see why you should trouble yourself with physicians while Mr. Thrale grows better. Company and bustle will, I hope, complete his cure. Let him gallop over the Downs in the morning, call his friends about him to dinner, and frisk in the rooms at night³, and outrun time and outface misfortune.

Notwithstanding all authorities against bleeding, Mr. Thrale bled himself well ten days ago.

You will lead a jolly life, and perhaps think little of me; but I have been invited twice to Mrs. Vesey's conversation⁴, but have not gone. The gout that was in my ankles when Queeney criticised my gait, passed into my toe, but I have hunted it, and starved it, and it makes no figure. It has drawn some attention, for Lord and Lady Lucan sent to enquire after me. This is all the news that I have to tell you. Yesterday I dined with Mr.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 63.

² They soon left Tunbridge Wells for Brighton. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 267.

³ 'In the evening we went to the rooms, which at this time are open every other night at Shergold's, or the New Assembly Rooms, and the alternate nights at Hick's or the Ship Tavern. There was very little company. Almost everybody but ourselves went to cards.' *Ib.* p. 268.

⁴ *Conversation* is apparently a translation of *conversazione*. Johnson uses it again, *post*, Letter of December 31, 1783. In the Letter of June 15, 1780, he writes:—'I was at Renny's *conversations*.' As we have not the originals a misprint is possible. Hawkins writes of 'a tea-conversation.' *Post*, p. 113, n. 3. For Mrs. Vesey see *ante*, ii. 88, n. 3, and for Lady Lucan, ii. 65.

Strahan,

Strahan, and Boswell was there¹. We shall be both to-morrow at Mr. Ramsay's². Now sure I have told you quite all, unless you yet want to be told that

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

633.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Oct. 16, 1779.

The advice given you by Dr. Pepys⁴ agrees very exactly with my notions. I would not bleed but in exigencies. Riding and cheerfulness will, I hope, do all the business. All alive and merry, must be my master's motto.

How did you light on your specifick for the tooth-ach? You have now been troubled with it less. I am glad you are at last relieved.

You say nothing of the *younglings*⁵; I hope they are not spoiled with the pleasures of Brighthelmston, a dangerous place, we were told, for *children*. You will do well to keep them out of harm's way.

From the younglings let me pass to a veteran; you tell me nothing of Mr. S——⁶; I hope he is well, and cheerful and communicative. Does Mr. Thrale go and talk with him, and do you run in and out? You may both be the better for his conversation.

I am sorry for poor Thomas⁷, who was a decent and civil

¹ *Life*, iii. 400.

² *Life*, iii. 407.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 64.

⁴ Sir Lucas Pepys. Boswell calling on Johnson on March 22, 1783, says:—"He was better, but I perceived he was but an unruly patient, for Sir Lucas Pepys, who visited him, while I was with him said, "If you were *tractable*, Sir, I should prescribe for you." *Life*, iv. 169.

⁵ Miss Burney and Miss Thrale.

⁶ Perhaps Mr. Scrase (*ante*, i. 395) or a Mr. Selwin to whom Miss Burney took 'a prodigious fancy,'

who was now at Brighton. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 285; v. 300.

⁷ 'Mrs. Thrale entered all our names at Thomas's, the fashionable bookseller; but we find he has now a rival, situated also upon the Steyn, who seems to carry away all the custom and all the company. This is a Mr. Bowen who is just come from London. Mrs. Thrale, at the same time that she sees his management and contrivance, so much admires his sagacity and dexterity, that, though open-eyed, she is as easily wrought upon to part with her man.

man. It is hard that he should be overwhelmed by a new-comer. But *thou by some other shalt be laid as low*. Bowen's day may come. A finer shop may be erected, kept by yet a fairer man, and crowded by greater numbers of fine gentlemen and fine ladies.

My foot gives me very little trouble; but it is not yet well. I have dined, since you saw me, not so often as once in two days. But I am told how well I look; and I really think I get more mobility. I dined on Tuesday with Ramsay, and on Thursday with Paoli, who talked of coming to see you, till I told him of your migration.

Mrs. Williams is not yet returned; but discord and discontent reign in my humble habitation as in the palaces of monarchs.—Mr. Levet and Mrs. Desmoulins have vowed eternal hate. Levet is the more insidious, and wants me to turn her out¹. Poor Williams writes word that she is no better, and has left off her physick. Mr. Levet has seen Dr. Lewis, who declares himself hopeless of doing her any good. Lawrence desponded some time ago.

I thought I had a little fever some time, but it seems to be starved away. Bozzy says, he never saw me so well. I hope you will say the same when you see me: methinks it will be pleasant to see you all—there is no danger of my forgetting you. Only keep or grow all well, and then I hope our meeting will be happy.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

634.

TO MISS REYNOLDS².

DEAREST MADAM,

Oct. 19, 1779.

You are extremely kind in taking so much trouble. My foot is almost well; and one of my first visits will certainly be to Dover Street³. You will do me a great favour if you will

money as any of the many dupes in this place whom he persuades to require indispensably whatever he shows them.' *Ib.* i. 267.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 74, 77.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 639.

³ *Ante*, ii. 85, n. 1.

buy

buy for me the prints of Mr. Burke, Mr. Dyer¹, and Dr. Goldsmith, as you know good impressions. If any of your own pictures are engraved, buy them for me. I am fitting up a little room with prints.

I am your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

635.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².

DEAR SIR,

[When I found that the Deanery had given you no uneasiness, I was satisfied, and thought no more of writing. You may indeed be very well without it, and [I] am glad to find that you think so yourself. You have enough, if you are satisfied³.]

Mr. Thrale, after whose case you will have a natural curiosity, is with his family at Brighthelmston. He rides very vigorously, and runs much into company, and is very angry if it be thought that any thing ails him. Mrs. Thrale thinks him for the present in no danger. I had no mind to go with them, for I have had what Brighthelmston can give, and I know not they much wanted me.

I have had a little catch⁴ of the gout; but as I have had no great opinion of the benefits which it is supposed to convey, I made haste to be easy, and drove it away after two days⁵.

¹ Samuel Dyer, a member of the Ivy Lane Club and the Literary Club. *Life*, iv. 10, 436. Johnson consulted him about a piece of Latin, saying:—‘Sir, I beg to have your judgment, for I know your nicety.’ *Ib.* iv. 11. Sir Joshua Reynolds thought ‘he was the author of *Junius* assisted by Edmund and William Burke.’ Prior’s *Malone*, p. 419. The print of him which Johnson wanted was the mezzotinto from Reynolds’s portrait. ‘It has been copied for the *Lives of the Poets* by mistake, as if it were the portrait of John Dyer, author of a poem called the *Fleece*.’ *Ib.* p. 423.

² First published in *Notes and*

Queries, 6th S. v. 461.

³ This paragraph is erased in the original. The only Deanery that had been filled up this summer was that of Rochester, on June 16. Le Neve’s *Fast. Eccl. Angl.*, ii. 579. See *post*, Letter of November 14, 1781, for Taylor’s longings after another Deanery.

⁴ There is no instance in Johnson’s *Dictionary* or in Dr. Murray’s of *catch* used in this sense.

⁵ Horace Walpole writing after an attack of the gout, says:—‘The pain would be endurable were it to end here; but being the wicket through which one squeezes into old age, and the prospect pointing to more such

Publick affairs continue to go on without much mending, and there are those still who either fright themselves or would fright others with an invasion¹; but my opinion is that the French neither have nor had in any part of the Summer a number of ships on the opposite coast equal to the transportation of twenty or of ten thousand Men. Such a fleet cannot be hid in a creek, it must be safely [easily?] visible and yet I believe no man has seen the man that has seen it. The ships of war were within sight of Plymouth, and only within sight.

I wish, I knew how your health stands. My friends congratulate me upon my looks, and indeed I am very free from some of the most troublesome of my old complaints, but I have

wickets, I cannot comfort myself with that common delusion of intermediate health. What does the gout cure that is so bad as itself?' *Letters*, v. 260. Nevertheless twelve years later he wrote:—'The gout prevents other illnesses and prolongs life. Could I cure it, should not I have a fever, a palsy, or an apoplexy?' *Ib.* viii. 362. John Wesley refers to the same delusion when he writes:—'Regard not them who say, "The gout ought not to be cured."' *Primitive Physick*, ed. 1762, p. 70.

¹ The Earl of Carlisle wrote to George Selwyn on June 18 of this year:—'I never saw less despondency, and more spirit manifested in a difficult moment, than at the present. Our common practice is to be alarmed for two or three days, and then to go to all the balls and operas, as if the country was in the greatest safety.' G. Selwyn's *Life*, &c., ed. by Jesse, iv. 198.

Susan Burney, who was staying at Chesington in Surrey, wrote on August 25:—'A report reached us from Kingston that the French and Spaniards were landed. Mr. Crisp, who spends his life in perpetual apprehension of terrible national ca-

lamities, went to Kingston the next morning, and came back with a countenance calculated to terrify and crush temerity itself. He could eat no dinner. Troops of French and Spaniards were landed at Falmouth, whilst the combined Fleets were throwing bombs into Plymouth. This day and the next we spent really very miserably. Sunday we received intelligence from my father, who was at Mr. Chamier's [the Under Secretary of State], that the French had not yet attempted to land, and though much was to be dreaded, there yet remained something to hope.' *Early Diary of Fanny Burney*, ii. 263.

Mrs. Barbauld writing in July, 1803, when Napoleon was threatening England, says:—'Pray are you an alarmist? One hardly knows whether to be frightened or diverted on seeing people assembled at a dinner-table, appearing to enjoy extremely the fare and the company, and saying all the while with a most smiling and placid countenance, that the French are to land in a fortnight, and London is to be sacked and plundered for three days—and then they talk of going to watering-places.' Barbauld's *Works*, ii. 92.

gained

gained this relief by very steady use of mercury and purgatives, with some opium, and some abstinence. I have eaten more fruit this summer than perhaps in any since I was twenty years old, but though it certainly did me no harm, I know not that I had any medicinal good from it¹.

Write to me soon. We are both old. How few of those whom we have known in our youth are left alive! May we yet live to some better purpose.

I am, Sir, your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Oct. 19, 1779.

To the Rev^d Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

636.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

October 21, 1779.

Your treatment of little * * * * was undoubtedly right; when there is so strong a reason against any thing as unconquerable terrour, there ought surely to be some weighty reason for it before it is done. But for putting into the water³ a child already well, it is not very easy to find any reason strong or weak. That the nurses fretted, will supply me during life with an additional motive to keep every child, as far as is possible, out of a nurse's power. A nurse made of common mould will have a pride in overpowering a child's reluctance. There are few minds to which tyranny is not delightful; power is nothing but as it is felt, and the delight of superiority is proportionate to the resistance overcome⁴.

I walked yesterday to Covent-garden, and feel to-day neither

¹ In his *Life of Swift* he scoffs at that writer's notion that the giddiness from which he suffered had been caused by eating too much fruit in his youth. 'Almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience.' *Works*, viii. 194.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 67.

³ No doubt into the sea, for they were at Brighton.

⁴ Johnson in the *Rambler*, No. 114, after showing how flattering and delightful are power and superiority, continues:—'We love to overlook the boundaries which we do not wish to pass; and as the Roman satirist remarks, he that has no design to take the life of another is yet glad to have it in his hands.' The Roman satirist is Juvenal. *Satires*, x. 96.

pain nor weakness. Send me, if you can, such an account of yourself and my master.

Sir Philip¹ sent me word that he should be in town, but he has not yet called. Yesterday came Lady Lucan and Miss Bingham², and she said it was the first visit that she had paid.

Your new friend Mr. Bowen, who has sold fifty sets, had but thirty to sell, and I am afraid has yet a set or two for a friend. There is a great deal of fallacy in this world. I hope you do not teach the company wholly to forsake poor Thomas³.

The want of company is an inconvenience, but Mr. Cumberland is a million⁴. Make the most of what you have. Send my master out to hunt in the morning, and to walk the rooms in the evening; and bring him as active as a stag on the mountain, back to the borough. When he is in motion he is mending.

The young ones are very good in minding their book. If I do not make something of them, *'twill reflect upon me, as I knew not my trade*; for their parts are sufficiently known, and every body will have a better opinion of their industry than of mine. However, I hope when they come back, to accustom them to more lessons⁵.

Your account of Mr. Scrase gives me no delight. He was

¹ Sir Philip J. Clerk. *Ante*, ii. 94.

² Bingham is the family name of the Earls of Lucan. Miss Bingham married in 1781 the second Earl Spencer; and by him was the mother of Viscount Althorp, the Leader of the House of Commons from 1830 to 1834. During the time that her husband was at the head of the Admiralty 'she is often touchingly mentioned in the letters of Nelson and Collingwood, as one who was sure to sympathise with them in their difficulties. She used playfully to call Nelson her bulldog.' *Memoir of Viscount Althorp*, p. 20. Gibbon described her in 1785 as 'a charming woman who with sense and spirit has the simplicity and playfulness of a child.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, ii. 384. See *ante*, ii. 65, *nn.* 4, 9.

³ For Bowen and Thomas, see *ante*, ii. 106, *n.* 6. The 'sets' were sets of the first four volumes of the *Lives*. See next Letter where Johnson owns that he did Bowen wrong.

⁴ Boswell quotes this passage in a note. *Life*, iv. 384, *n.* 2. Northcote, according to Hazlitt (*Conversations of Northcote*, p. 275), said that Johnson and his friends 'never admitted C—— [Cumberland] as one of the set; Sir Joshua did not invite him to dinner. If he had been in the room, Goldsmith would have flown out of it as if a dragon had been there. I remember Garrick once saying, "D—n his dish-clout face; his plays would never do, if it were not for my patching them up and acting in them."'

⁵ *Ante*, ii. 98, *n.* 2.

a friend

a friend upon all occasions, whether assistance was wanted from the purse or the understanding¹. When he is gone, our barrier against calamity is weakened; and we must act with caution, or we shall be in more danger. Consult him, while his advice is yet to be had.

What makes C—— hate B——. D—— is indeed a rival, and can upon occasion *provoke a bugle*. But what has B—— done? Does he not like her look²?

* * * * has passed one evening with me. He has made great discoveries in a library at Cambridge, and he finds so many precious materials, that his book must be a porter's load. He has sent me another sheet³.

I am, dearest of all dear Ladies,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

637.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

London, October 25, 1779.

Let me repair an injury done by misinformation to Mr. Bowen. He had at first indeed only thirty, that is, two shares; but he afterwards purchased two shares more⁵. So all that he says I suppose is true.

¹ *Ante*, i. 348, 395.

² C— is Cumberland, B— Miss Burney, and D— Dr. Delap, who had with him 'another tragedy, and told Miss Burney she would have it to read.' He begged Mrs. Thrale for a prologue. Cumberland avoided Miss Burney, because, as all the folk said, it had got abroad that she was 'to bring out a play that season. Though in all other respects he is an agreeable and a good man, he is notorious for hating and envying and spiting all authors in the dramatic line. He had given evident marks of displeasure at Dr. Delap's name whenever Mrs. Thrale has mentioned it.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 272, 275, and Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 302. Dr. Delap's success had not been so great as to justify

jealousy. He had by this time brought out only one of his seven tragedies—*Hecuba*—and that had reached only the third night. Baker's *Biog. Dram.*, ii. 289.

'Provoke a bugle,' if it is not a quotation, was perhaps one of the catch-words of the Streatham set. Johnson gives as one of the meanings of *bugle*, 'a sort of wild ox.'

³ See *post*, p. 118, where the same author is probably mentioned. I suspect that Dr. Burney is meant, who a year earlier had gone to Oxford in search of materials for his *History of Music*. It fills four quarto volumes. Johnson's name is in the list of subscribers.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 70.

⁵ As is shown by the title-page of
On

On Saturday I walked to Dover-street¹, and back. Yesterday I dined with Sir Joshua. There was Mr. Elliot of Cornwall², who enquired after my master. At night I was bespoken by Lady Lucan; but she was taken ill, and the assembly was put off. I am to dine with Renny³ to-morrow.

I hope Mr. Thrale scours the country after the early horn, and at night flutters about the rooms, and once a-day makes a lusty dinner. I eat meat but once in two days, at most but four times a-week, reckoning several weeks together; for it is neither necessary nor prudent to be nice in regimen. Renny told me yesterday, that I look better than when she knew me first.

It is now past the postman's time, and I have no letter; and that is not well done, because I long for a letter; and you should always let me know whether you and Mr. Thrale, and all the rest, are or are not well. Do not serve me so often, because your silence is always a disappointment.

Some old gentlewomen at the next door are in very great distress. Their little annuity comes from Jamaica, and is therefore uncertain; and one of them has had a fall, and both are very helpless; and the poor have you to help them. Persuade my master to let me give them something for him. It will be bestowed upon real want.

I hope all the younglings go on well, that the eldest are very prudent, and the rest very merry. We are to be merry but a little while; Prudence soon comes to spoil our mirth. Old Times

the *Lives*, thirty-six firms of book-sellers had shares in it. J. Bowen's name comes last.

¹ Where Miss Reynolds lodged. *Ante*, ii. 85.

² Afterwards Lord Eliot. He had travelled with Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's illegitimate son. *Life*, iv. 332.

³ Miss Reynolds. 'At a tea-conversation,' writes Hawkins, 'Johnson addressing himself to Miss Reynolds went on rhyming thus:—

"I pray thee, gentle Renny dear,
That thou wilt give to me,

VOL. II.

With cream and sugar temper'd
well,

Another dish of tea.

Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,
Shall long detain the cup,
When once unto the bottom I
Have drunk the liquor up.

Yet hear at last this mournful
truth,

Nor hear it with a frown,
Thou canst not make the tea so
fast

As I can gulp it down."

HAWKINS'S *Life of Johnson*, p. 389.

have

have bequeathed us a precept, to *be merry and wise*, but who has been able to observe it.

There is a very furious fellow writing with might and main against the life of Milton¹.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

638.

TO MRS. ASTON².

DEAREST MADAM,

Mrs. Gastrel is so kind as to write to me, and yet I always write to you, but I consider what is written to either as written to both. Publick affairs do not seem to promise much amendment, and the nation is now full of distress. What will be [the] event of things none can tell, we may still hope for better times³.

My health, which I began to recover, when I was in the country, continues still in a good state; it costs me indeed some physick, and something of abstinence, but it pays the cost. I wish, dear Madam, I could hear a little of your improvements.

Here is no news. The talk of the invasion⁴ seems to be over. But a very turbulent Session of Parliament is expected⁵, though turbulence is not likely to do any good. Those are happiest who are out of the noise and tumult. There will be no great violence of faction at Stowhill, and that it may [be] free from that and all other inconvenience and disturbance, is the sincere wish of all your friends.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most humble servant.

Oct. 25, 1779.

Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ 'Against his *Life of Milton* the hounds of Whiggism have opened in full cry.' *Life*, iv. 40.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 640. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

³ Horace Walpole, a week later, lamenting the decay of England, says:—'Ambition I never felt, but

was content with being an individual in so free and splendid a nation. 'Tis all gone, Madam, and methinks one sinks in one's own estimation in proportion.' *Letters*, vii. 268. Johnson's tone, when he speaks of public affairs, henceforth is gloomy.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 109.

⁵ Parliament met on November 25. *Parl. Hist.* xx. 1020.

To

639.

To JAMES BOSWELL.

London, October 27, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 413.

640.

To MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, October 28, 1779.

Some days before our last separation, Mr. Thrale and I had one evening an earnest discourse about the business with Mr. Scrase. For myself, you may be sure I am very willing to be useful; but surely all use of such an office is at a very great distance². Do not let those fears prevail which you know to be unreasonable; a will brings the end of life no nearer³. But with this we will have done, and please ourselves with wishing my master *multos et felices*.

C—— L——⁴ accuses * * * * of making a party against her play. I always hissed away the charge, supposing him a man of honour; but I shall now defend him with less confidence.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 72.

² For Mr. Scrase, the solicitor, see *ante*, i. 395. The office that Johnson was to fill was that of one of Mr. Thrale's executors. *Life*, iv. 85, and *post*, pp. 119, 126.

³ 'Thus I gather that death is disagreeable to most citizens, because they commonly die intestate; this being a rule that when their will is made they think themselves nearer a grave than before: now they, out of the wisdom of thousands, think to scare destiny, from which there is no appeal, by not making a will, or to live longer by protestation of their unwillingness to die.' *An Essay on Death*. Bacon's *Works*, ed. 1803, ii. 476. (In Spedding's *Bacon*, vi. 594, it is maintained that this Essay is not Bacon's.) Johnson with all his wisdom was with difficulty brought to complete his own will, and only finally executed it five days before

his death. *Life*, iv. 402.

⁴ 'Charlotte Lennox.' BARETTI. 'Dr. Goldsmith, upon occasion of Mrs. Lennox's bringing out a play, said to Dr. Johnson at the CLUB, that a person had advised him to go and hiss it, because she had attacked Shakspeare in her book called *Shakspeare Illustrated*. JOHNSON. "And did not you tell him he was a rascal?" GOLDSMITH. "No, Sir, I did not. Perhaps he might not mean what he said." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if he lied, it is a different thing." Colman slyly said, (but it is believed Dr. Johnson did not hear him,) "Then the proper expression should have been,—Sir, if you don't lie, you're a rascal.'" *Life*, iv. 10. The play, it is believed, was *The Sister*, brought out in 1769. *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1769, p. 199. Cumberland very likely was the person Mrs. Lennox accused. *Ante*, ii. 112, n. 2.

Nequid nimis. Horace says, that *Nil admirari* is the only thing that can make or keep a man happy¹. It is with equal truth the only thing that can make or keep a man honest. The desire of fame not regulated, is as dangerous to virtue as that of money. I hope C—— scorns his little malice².

I have had a letter for * * * ³, which I have inclosed. Do not lose it; for it contains a testimony that there may be some pleasure in this world; and that I may have a little of the little that there is, pray write to me. I thought your last letter long in coming.

The two younglings, what hinders them from writing to me. I hope they do not forget me.

Will Master give me any thing for my poor neighbours? I have had from Sir Joshua and Mr. Strahan; they are very old maids, very friendless and very helpless.

Mrs. Williams talks of coming home this week from Kingston, and then there will be *merry doings*⁴.

I eat meat seldom, and take physick often, and fancy that I grow light and airy⁵. A man that does not begin to grow light and airy at seventy, is certainly losing time, if he intends ever to be light and airy.

I dined on Tuesday with * * * ⁶ and hope her little head begins to settle. She has, however, some scruples about the company of a lady whom she has lately known. I pacified her as well as I could. So no more at present; but hoping you are

¹ *Horace*, 1 *Epis.* vi. 1.

‘Not to admire is all the art I know
To make men happy, and to keep
them so.’

CREECH.

² C——, I suppose, is Charlotte.

³ I suspect Johnson wrote not ‘for,’ but ‘from Boswell.’ Boswell had written to him in high spirits from Chester, and begged two lines in reply, so as ‘to keep his lamp burning bright.’ Johnson wrote back on the 27th:—‘Of what importance can it be to hear of distant friends to a man who finds himself welcome wherever he goes, and makes new

friends faster than he can want them?’ *Life*, iii. 413.

⁴ ‘So here are merry doings,’ he writes, *post*, Letter of October 27, 1781.

⁵ *Airy* is a favourite word with Johnson. Mrs. Cholmondely he called ‘a very airy lady.’ *Life*, v. 248. In *Rasselas*, ch. xxv, he says, ‘the daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful.’ He defines it as ‘gay, sprightly, full of mirth,’ &c.

⁶ ‘I could fill up this blank if I chose, but will not, as thereby hangs a tale.’ BARETTI.

all in good health, as I am at this time of writing, (excuse haste).

I am, dearest dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

641.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 2, 1779.

This day I thought myself sure of a letter, but so I am constantly served. Mr. Cumberland and Mrs. * * * *, and Mrs. Byron², and any body else, puts me out of your head; and I know no more of you than if you were on the other side of the Caspian. I thought the two young things were to write too; but for them I do not much care.

On Saturday came home Mrs. Williams, neither better nor worse than when she went; and I dined at * * * 's, and found them well pleased with their Italian journey. He took his Lady and son, and three daughters. They staid five months at Rome. They will have now something to talk of.

I gave my poor neighbour³ your half guinea, and ventured upon making it two guineas at my master's expence. Pray, Madam, how do I owe you half a guinea?

I dined on Sunday with Mr. Strahan, and have not been very well for some little time. Last night I was afraid of the gout, but it is gone to-day.

There was on Sunday night a fire at the north end of London-bridge, which has, they say, destroyed the water-work⁴.

Does Mr. Thrale continue *to hunt in fields for health unbought*?⁵

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 74.

² *Ante*, ii. 79.

³ Johnson, I suspect, wrote *neighbours*. *Ante*, ii. 113.

⁴ 'In the year 1582 Peter Morice, a Dutchman, contrived a water-engine to supply the citizens with Thames water; this was about fifty years ago improved by Mr. Sorocold, and since that time by that great master of hydraulics, Mr. Hadley. The wheels placed under the arches of the Bridge are moved by the com-

mon stream of the tide-water of the Thames. In the first arch next the City [the north end of the bridge] is one wheel with double work of sixteen forcers.' Dodsley's *London and its Environs*, ed. 1761, iv. 146. For the fire see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1779, p. 562.

⁵ 'Better to hunt in fields for health unbought

Than see the doctor for a nauseous draught.'

DRYDEN. *Lines to John Driden*.

If his taste of former pleasures returns, it is a strong proof of his recovery. When we meet, we will be jolly blades.

I know not well how it has happened, but I have never yet been at the B——s. * * * * has called twice on me, and I have seen some more sheets—and away we go¹.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

642.

TO MRS. THRALE².

MADAM,

London, Nov. 4, 1779.

So I may write and write, and nobody care; but you can write often enough to Dr. Burney. Queeney sent me a pretty letter, to which * * * added a silly short note, in such a silly white hand, that I was glad it was no longer³.

I had heard before that * * * had lost not only ten thousand, as you tell me, but twenty thousand, as you with great consistency tell Dr. Burney; but knowing that no man can lose what he has not, I took it little to heart. I did not think of borrowing; and indeed he that borrows money for adventures deserves to lose it. No man should put into a lottery more than he can spare. Neither D——, however, nor B—— have given occasion to his loss⁴.

Notice is taken that I have a cold and a cough; but I have been so long used to disorders so much more afflictive, that I have

¹ The B——s are, I think, the Burneys. *Ante*, ii. 112, *n.* 3.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 76.

³ 'Do you know I have been writing to Dr. Johnson! I tremble to mention it; but he sent a message in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, to wonder why his pupils did not write to him, and to hope they did not forget him. Miss Thrale therefore wrote a letter immediately, and I added only this little postscript:—"P.S. Dr. Johnson's other pupil a little longs to add a few lines to this letter,—but knows too well that all she has to say might

be comprised in signing herself his obliged and most obedient servant, F. B.: so that's better than a long rigmarole about nothing.'" *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, i. 285.

⁴ The person who had had the loss is described, *post*, p. 123, as C——. Cumberland would seem to be the man, the more so as D—— and B—— would fit in with what has been said about Dr. Delap and Miss Burney. *Ante*, ii. 112, *n.* 2. For Mrs. Thrale's 'laxity of narration,' see *Life*, iii. 243.

thought

thought on them but little. If they grow worse, something should be done.

I hear from every body that Mr. Thrale grows better. He is *columen domus*¹; and if he stands firm, little evils may be overlooked. Drive him out in the morning, lead him out at night, keep him in what bustle you can.

Do not neglect Scrase. You may perhaps do for him what you have done for * * * * The serious affair I do not wonder that you cannot mention; and yet I wish it were transacted while Scrase can direct and superintend it². No other man, if he shall have the same skill and kindness, which I know not where to find, will have the same influence.

Sir Philip³ never called upon me, though he promised me to do it. Somebody else has laid hold upon him.

I live here in stark solitude. Nobody has called upon me this live-long day; yet I comfort myself that I have no tortures in the night. I have not indeed much sleep; but I suppose I have enough, for I am not as sleepy in the day-time as formerly.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

643.

TO MRS. ASTON⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

Having had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Boswel that he found you better than he expected, I will not forbear to tell you how much I was delighted with the news⁵. May your health encrease and encrease, till you are as well as you can wish yourself, or I can wish you.

My Friends tell me that my health improves too. It is certain that I use both physick and abstinence, and my endeavours have been blessed with more success than at my age I could reasonably hope. I please myself with the thoughts of visiting you

¹ *Ante*, i. 405.

² *Ante*, ii. 115, n. 2.

³ *Ante*, ii. 94, n. 4.

⁴ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 640. Corrected by me

from the original in Pembroke College Library.

⁵ Boswell, on his return from his autumn visit to London, had passed a night at Lichfield. *Life*, iii. 411.

next

next year in so robust a state that I shall not be afraid of the hill between Mrs. Gastrel's house and yours, nor think it necessary to rest myself between Stowhill and Lucy Porter's. Of publick affairs I can give you no very comfortable account. The Invasion has vanished for the present as I expected. I never believed that any invasion was intended¹. But whatever we have escaped we have done nothing, nor are likely to do better another year. We, however, who have no part of the nation's welfare entrusted to our management, have nothing to do but to serve God, and leave the world submissively in his hands.

All trade is dead, and pleasure is scarce alive. Nothing almost² is purchased but such things as the buyer cannot be without, so that a general sluggishness and general discontent are spread over the town. All the trades of luxury and elegance are nearly at a Stand³. What the Parliament when it meets will do, and indeed what it ought to do is very difficult to say.

Pray set Mrs. Gastrel, who is a dear good lady, to write to me from time to time, for I have great delight in hearing from you, especially when I hear any good news of your health.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

Nov. 5, 1779.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 109.

² See *Life*, ii. 446, for a note on *almost nothing*. Beattie, like Boswell's 'accurate English friend,' looked upon it as not English. See his *Scoticisms*, p. 9.

³ Horace Walpole wrote ten days later:—'The friends of Government, who have thought of nothing but of reducing us to our islandhood, and bringing us back to the simplicity of ancient times, when we were the frugal, temperate, virtuous old Eng-

lish, ask how we did before tea and sugar were known. Better, no doubt; but as I did not happen to be born two or three hundred years ago, I cannot recollect precisely whether diluted acorns and barley bread, spread with honey, made a very luxurious breakfast.' *Letters*, vii. 275. On November 16 he wrote:—'Distress and dissatisfaction do begin to murmur everywhere. Men do perceive that they cannot live upon loyalty and dissipation.' *Ib.* p. 277.

To

644.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

London, November 7, 1779.

Poor Mrs., I am glad that she runs to you at last for shelter. Give her, dear Madam, what comfort you can. Has any calamity fallen upon her? Her husband, so much as I hear, is well enough spoken of; nor is it supposed that he had power to do more than has been done². But life must have its end, and commonly an end of gloomy discontent, and lingering distress.

While you are vigorous and sprightly, you must take into your protection as many as you can of those who are tottering under their burden. When you want the same support, may you always find it.

I have for some time had a cough and a cold, but I did not mind it; continuance, however, makes it heavy; but it seems to be going away.

My master, I hope, hunts and walks, and courts the belles, and shakes Brighthelmston. When he comes back, frolick and active, we will make a feast, and drink his health, and have a noble day.

Of the Lucans³ I have never heard since. On Saturday, after having fasted almost all the week, I dined with Renny⁴. For

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 78.

² I only arrived at the clue to this passage by the discovery that a letter of Mrs. Thrale given in Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary* under the date of 1781 (ii. 3) must have been written in the autumn of 1779. In it she writes:—'In the midst of my own misery I felt for my dear Mrs. Byron's; but Chamier [Under Secretary of State, *Life*, i. 478, n. 1] has relieved that anxiety by assurances that the Admiral behaved quite unexceptionably, and that as to honour in the West Indies all goes well. The Grenadas are a heavy loss indeed, nor is it supposed possible for Byron to protect Barbadoes and Antigua.'

Horace Walpole, writing on September 16 about the capture of Grenada, says:—'The subsequent narrative of the engagement is more favourable. It allows the victory to the enemy, but makes their loss of men much the more considerable.' *Letters*, vii. 252. For an account of the French conquests in the West Indies see *Ann. Reg.* 1779, i. 199. Poor Mrs. B—— and her husband were, I conjecture, Admiral and Mrs. Byron, grand-parents of the poet. *Ante*, ii. 79, n. 5, and *post*, Letter of November 12, 1781.

³ *Ante*, ii. 65, nn. 4, 9.

⁴ Miss Reynolds. *Ante*, ii. 113, n. 3.

Wednesday,

Wednesday I am invited by the * * * s, and if I am well, purpose to go. I imagine there will be a large company. The invitation is to dine and spend the evening. Too much at a time. I shall be in danger of crying out, with Mr. Head, *catamaran*, whatever that may mean, for it seemed to imply tediousness and disgust¹. I do not much like to go, and I do not much like to stay away.

Have you any assemblies at this time of the year? and does Queeney dance? and does B—— dance too? I would have B—— dance with C——, and so make all up².

Discord keeps her residence in this habitation, but she has for some time been silent. We have much malice, but no mischief. Levet is rather a friend to Williams, because he hates Desmoulines more. A thing that he should hate more than Desmoulines, is not to be found³.

¹ Mrs. Piozzi says that Mr. Head's real name was Plunkett. He was a low Irish parasite, whom Mr. Thrale and Mr. Murphy once made personate some lord whom they had promised to introduce to the beautiful Miss Gunnings [*Life*, v. 359, *n.* 2] when they came over to make their fortunes. 'The girls played off their best airs, till the fellow wearied with his ill-acted character burst out on a sudden as they sat at tea, and cried "Catamaran! young gentlemen with two shoes and never a heel: when will you have done with silly jokes now? Ladies," turning to the future peeresses, "never mind these merry boys; but if you really can afford to pay for some incomparable silk stockings, or true India handkerchiefs, here they are now"; rummaging his smuggler's pockets; but the girls jumped up and turned them all three into the street, where Thrale and Murphy cursed their senseless assistant, and called him *Head*, because they swore he had none.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 317.

² Miss Burney and Cumberland.

They had met at the Rooms, but he had at once turned round. 'Mrs. Thrale,' writes Miss Burney, 'told me the conversation she had just had with him. As soon as I made off, he said with a spiteful tone of voice, "Oh! that young lady is an author, I hear." "Yes," answered Mrs. Thrale, "author of *Evelina*." "Humph!—I am told it has some humour." "Ay, indeed, Johnson says nothing like it has appeared for years." "So," cried he, biting his lips, and waving uneasily in his chair, "so, so!" "Yes," continued she, "And Sir Joshua Reynolds told Mr. Thrale he would give fifty pounds to know the author." "So, so!—oh! vastly well!" replied he, putting his hand on his forehead. "Nay," added she, "Burke himself sat up all night to finish it." This seemed quite too much for him; he put both his hands to his face, and waving backwards and forwards said:—"Oh! vastly well!—this will do for anything!" with a tone as much as to say, "Pray, no more." Mrs. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 276.

³ *Ante*, ii. 107.

I hear,

I hear, but you never tell me any thing, that you have at last begun to bathe¹. I am sorry that your toothach kept you out of the water so long, because I know you love to be in it.

If such letters as this were to cost you any thing, I should hardly write them²; but since they come to you for nothing, I am willing enough to write, though I have nothing to say; because a sorry letter serves to keep one from dropping totally out of your head; and I would not have you forget that there is in the world such a poor being as,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

645.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 8, 1779.

You are a dear dear lady. To write so often, and so sweetly, makes some amends for your absence. Your last letter came about half an hour after my last letter was sent away; but now I have another. You have much to tell me, and I have nothing to tell you; yet I am eager to write, because I am eager for your answer.

I thought C—— had told you his loss⁴. If it be only report, I do not much credit it. Something perhaps he may have ventured, but I do not believe he had ten thousand pounds, or the means of borrowing it. Of B——, I suppose the fact is true, that he is gone; but for his loss, can any body tell who has been the winner? And if he has lost a sum disproportionate to his fortune, why should he run away when payment cannot be compelled?

Of Sir Thomas⁵ I can make no estimate; but if he is

¹ The month of November is late in the year for sea-bathing. We find Johnson, when he was sixty-seven years old, bathing near the end of October. *Life*, iii. 92. See *post*, Letter of November 14, 1782, *n*.

² Johnson no doubt addressed them

to Mr. Thrale, who, as a member of parliament, received them free of charge.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 81.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 118.

⁵ 'Sir Thomas Mill.' BARETTI.

distressed,

distressed, I am sorry; for he was in his prosperity civil and officious.

It has happened to —, as to many active and prosperous men, that his mind has been wholly absorbed in business, or at intervals dissolved in amusement; and habituated so long to certain modes of employment or diversion, that in the decline of life it can no more receive a new train of images, than the hand can acquire dexterity in a new mechanical operation. For this reason a religious education is so necessary. Spiritual ideas may be recollected¹ in old age, but can hardly be acquired.

You shall not hide Mrs. * * * *² from me. For if she be a feeler³, I can bear a feeler as well as you; and hope, that in tenderness for what she feels from nature, I am able to forgive or neglect what she feels by affectation. I pity her, as one in a state to which all must come; and I think well of her judgment in chusing you to be the depository of her troubles, and easer of her bosom. Fondle her, and comfort her.

Your letters have commonly one good paragraph concerning my master, who appears to you, and to every body, to mend upon the whole; though your vigilance perceives some accidental and temporary alterations, which, however, I am willing to hope are more rare and more slight than they were at first. Let him hunt much, and think little, and avoid solitude. I hope time has brought some company whom you can call now to your table⁴. Does he take to —? Does he love her as you profess to love —? with a fifth part of the kindness that she has for me⁵. I am well rewarded for what I have taught you

¹ Johnson defines *to recollect* as 'to recover to memory.' See *Life*, iv. 126, where he distinguishes between *remember* and *recollect*.

² *Ante*, ii. 121.

³ 'BOSWELL. "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others as sensibly as many say they do." JOHNSON. "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*.'" *Life*, ii. 95.

⁴ 'We had a large party of gentle-

men to dinner. Among them was Single-speech Hamilton.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 293. Miss Burney gives amusing reports of the conversation at the Rooms and elsewhere. *Ib.* 278-296.

⁵ Mrs. Thrale replied:—'Poor Mrs. * * * * is past dissembling *her* cares, or their consequences, a ruined constitution: my master does not like her much, nor dislike her: he is all so gay now—*up among the boughs*, as Miss Owen calls it.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 85.

of computation¹, by seeing our friendship divided into factions; so we stand, do we? as two to ten. A pretty appearance upon paper, and still prettier in the heart. Well—*go thy ways old Jack*².

Of the capture of Jamaica nothing is known, nor do I think it probable or possible³. How the French should in a few day take from us an island, which we could not in almost a century take from a few fugitive Negroes whom the Spaniards left behind them, is not easily imagined⁴. If you stay much longer in Sussex, you may perhaps hear that London is taken.

We have a kind of epidemick cold amongst us, of which I have had my part, but not more than my part; and I think myself growing well. I have lived very sparingly, but shall have some dinner to-day; and Baretto dines with me⁵.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

646.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, November 13, 1779. Published in the *Life*, iii. 416.

¹ *Post*, Letter of July 24, 1783.

² 1 *Henry IV*, Act ii. sc. 4.

³ Horace Walpole wrote on November 6:—'If there is a sprig of truth left growing in Bedfordshire I entreat your Ladyship to spare me a cutting, for there is not a leaf to be had in town for love or money; everything is so dear! and yet falsehood bears a still higher price. Jamaica is taken, and it is not; the combined fleets are sailed, and they are not,' &c. *Letters*, vii. 270.

⁴ Near the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and again in the reign of Charles I, the English made attacks on Jamaica but did not occupy it. In 1655 an expedition sent by Cromwell

took possession of the island, after it had been in the possession of the Spaniards 161 years. The slaves, called Maroons, who had fled to the mountains, continued formidable. Down to the end of the eighteenth century their disaffection caused much trouble. *Encyclo. Brit.*, 9th ed., xiii. 550.

⁵ 'That I did as seldom as I could, though often scolded for it, but I hated to see the victuals gnawed by poor Mrs. Williams, that would often carve though stone-blind.' BARETTI. Boswell who dined at Johnson's house describes everything as 'in very good order.' *Life*, ii. 215.

TO

647.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 16, 1779.

Pray how long does a letter tarry between London and Brighthelmston? Your letter of the 12th I received on the 15th.

Poor Mrs. * * * is a feeler². It is well that she has yet power to feel. Fiction durst not have driven upon a few months such a conflux of misery. Comfort her as you can.

I have looked again into your grave letter. You mention trustees. I do not see who can be trustee for a casual and variable property, for a fortune yet to be acquired. How can any man be trusted with what he cannot possess, cannot ascertain, and cannot regulate? The trade must be carried on by somebody who must be answerable for the debts contracted³. This can be none but yourself; unless you deliver up the property to some other agent, and trust the chance both of his prudence and his honesty. Do not be frightened; trade could not be managed by those who manage it, if it had much difficulty⁴. Their great books are soon understood, and their language,

If speech it may be call'd, that speech is none
Distinguishable in number, mood, or tense⁵,

is understood with no very laborious application.

The help which you can have from any man as a trustee, you may have from him as a friend; the trusteeship may give him power to perplex, but will neither increase his benevolence to assist, nor his wisdom to advise.

Living on God, and on thyself rely.

Who should be trustee but you, for your own and your children's prosperity? I hope this is an end of this unpleasing speculation, and lighter matters may take their turn.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 90.

² *Ante*, ii. 124.

³ The brewery was carried on in her name after her husband's death. *Ante*, ii. 23, n. 1.

⁴ *Post*, Letter of April 11, 1781.

⁵ A parody of *Paradise Lost*, ii. 667 :—

'If shape it might be called that
shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint
or limb.'

What

What Mr. Scrase says about the Borough is true, but is nothing to the purpose. A house in the square will not cost so much as building in Southwark; but buildings are more likely to go on in Southwark if your dwelling is at St. James's¹. Every body has some desire that deserts the great road of prosperity, to look for pleasure in a bye-path. I do not see with so much indignation Mr. Thrale's desire of being the first Brewer, as your despicable dread of living in the Borough². Ambition in little things, is better than cowardice in little things; but both these things, however little to the publick eye, are great in their consequences to yourselves. The world cares not how you brew, or where you live; but it is the business of the one to brew in a manner most advantageous to his family, and of the other to live where the general interest may best be superintended. It was by an accidental visit to the Borough that you escaped great evils last Summer. Of this folly let there be an end, at least an intermission.

I am glad that Queeney danced with Mr. Wade³. She was the Sultanness of the evening; and I am glad that Mr. Thrale has found a riding companion whom he likes⁴. Let him ride, say I, till he leaves dejection and disease behind him; and let them

¹ Mr. Scrase, I think, had urged them to take a house at St. James's as cheaper than building in Southwark. Johnson replied, 'Yes; but if you leave Southwark Mr. Thrale will be more likely to begin enlarging his Brewery; for he would not be inconvenienced by the building going on close to his house. His great ambition is to enlarge his Brewery, so as to outbrew Whitbread.'

² 'Mr. Thrale took a ready-furnished house in Grosvenor Square.' BARETTI. See *Life*, iv. 72. From an old physician 'I learnt,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'what had determined my husband's choice to me. He had, the doctor said, asked several women, naming them, but all except me refused to live in the Borough, to which and to his business, he observed, he

was as unaccountably attached *now* as he had been in his father's time averse from both.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 256.

³ In a note on one of her letters written from Bath a year later Mrs. Piozzi says, that Mr. Wade had been 'hooted out of Bath for showing a lady's love-letters to him; such is the resentment of all the females that even the housemaid refused to make him bed.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 134; Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 320.

⁴ Perhaps Single-speech Hamilton who was at Brighton. One day riding after the hounds with Dr. Johnson on the Brighton Downs, 'he called out, "Why Johnson rides as well, for aught I see, as the most illiterate fellow in England."' *Piozzi's Anecdotes*, p. 206.

limp after him an hundred years without overtaking him. When he returns, let me see him frolick and airy, and social, and busy, and as kind to me as in former times.

You seem to be afraid that I should be starved before you come back. I have indeed practised abstinence with some stubbornness, and with some success; but as Dryden talks of *writing with a hat*¹, I am sometimes very witty with a knife and fork. I have managed myself very well; except that having no motive, I have no exercise.

At home we do not much quarrel; but perhaps the less we quarrel the more we hate. There is as much malignity amongst us as can well subsist, without any thoughts of daggers or poisons.

Mrs. — is by the help of frequent operations still kept alive; and such is the capricious destiny of mortals, that she will die more lamented by her husband, than I will promise to usefulness, wisdom, or sanctity. There is always something operating distinct from diligence or skill. Temple therefore in his composition of a hero, to the heroick virtues adds good fortune².

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

648.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

London, Nov. 20, 1779.

Indeed, dear Madam, I do not think that you have any reason to complain of Mr. —, or Mr. —⁴. What

¹ 'I'll write a Play, says one, for I
have got
A Broad-brim'd Hat, and Waste-
Belt towards a Plot.
Says th' other, I have one more
large than that,
Thus they out-write each other
with a Hat.'

Prologue to the Conquest of Granada.

² Sir William Temple in his *Essay Of Heroic Virtue*, says that 'the excellency of genius' must not only 'be cultivated by education and instruction,' but also 'must be assisted by fortune to preserve it to maturity;

because the noblest spirit or genius in the world, if it falls, though never so bravely, in its first enterprises, cannot deserve enough of mankind to pretend to so great a reward as the esteem of heroic virtue.' *Temple's Works*, ed. 1757, iii. 306.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 94.

⁴ Baretti fills up these two blanks with the names of Crutchley and Cator, who were joint executors with Johnson. *Life*, iv. 202, n. 1; 313. 'Mrs. Thrale suspected Crutchley to be the natural son of Thrale.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 351.

I proposed

I proposed is, I suppose, unusual. However, Mr. Thrale knows that I have suggested nothing to you that I had not first said to him. I hear he grows well so fast, that we are not likely to try whose way is best; and I hope he will grow better, and better, and better; and then away with executors and executrixes. He may settle his family himself.

I am not vexed at you for not liking the Borough, but for not liking the Borough better than other evils of greater magnitude. You must take physick, or be sick; you must live in the Borough, or live still worse.

Pray tell my Queeney how I love her for her letters; and tell Burney that now she is a good girl, I can love her again. Tell Mr. Scrase, that I am sincerely glad to hear that he is better. Tell my master, that I never was so glad to see him in my life, as I shall be now to see him well; and tell yourself, that except my master, nobody has more kindness for you, than,

Dear Madam, your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

649.

TO MRS. PORTER¹.

Dec. 2, 1779.

I have enclosed Mr. Boswell's answer. I still continue better than when you saw me, but am not just at this time very well, but hope to mend again. Publick affairs remain as they were. Do not let the papers fright you.

650.

TO DR. LAWRENCE.

[London], January 20, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 419.

¹ Printed in Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s *Auction Catalogue* for August 21, 1872, Lot 80. One page quarto.

Miss Porter wanted Boswell 'to inquire concerning the family of a gentleman who was then paying his addresses to Miss Doxy.' Johnson,

forwarding 'Lucy Porter's petition,' said:—'Return me her letter, which I have sent that you may know the whole case, and not be seduced to anything that you may afterwards repent. Miss Doxy perhaps you know to be Mr. Garrick's niece.' *Life*, iii. 417.

651.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

[Early in 1780.]

Mr. Johnson purposes to make his next attempt upon Prior, at least to consider him very soon, and desires that some volumes published of his papers, in two vols. 8vo, may be procured².

The turtle and sparrow can be but a fable³. The Conversation I never read.

652.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[Early in 1780.]

Dr. Warton tells me that Collins's first piece is in the G. M. for August, 1739⁴. For August there is no such thing. *Amasius*

¹ This and the next two notes were first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, pages 9, 10.

They refer to the *Lives of Prior, Granville and Collins*. These, as we learn by Johnson's Letter to Mrs. Thrale of May 9, 1780, were finished before that date.

² *Miscellaneous Works of the late Matthew Prior, Esq.*, 2 vols. 8vo., advertised in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1739, p. 556.

³ 'This refers,' says Nichols in a note, 'to a hint given him in consequence of what is said in the *Life of Prior* [*Works*, viii. 15] that "of his Tales there are only four."' Johnson was right in his statement, for *The Turtle and Sparrow*, if it is a tale, is *An Elegiac Tale, occasioned by the Death of Prince George*, 1708, and *Conversation*, though it also is called a tale, does not any more than the other belong to the class of which Johnson was thinking.

⁴ Johnson, in his *Life of Collins*, says that 'he first courted the notice of the public by some verses to a Lady Weeping, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.' As a kind

of appendix to the *Life* we find the following:—

'Mr. Collins's first production is added here from the *Poetical Calendar*:—

TO MISS AURELIA C—R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S
WEDDING.

Cease, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy state;
You may be happy in your turn,
And seize the treasure you regret.

With Love united Hymen stands,
And softly whispers to your charms;
"Meet but your lover in my hands,
You'll find your sister in his
arms."

Among Collins's *Poems*—far too few in number—this piece has been always given. Henceforth, I fear, it must no longer appear in that graceful company. It was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1739, p. 41, and is signed *Amasius*. Its author therefore was Dr. Swan.

Collins's first piece was published, not in the August number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as Dr. was

was at that time the poetical name of Dr. Swan, who translated Sydenham¹.

Where to find Collins I know not. I think I must make some short addition to Thomson's sheet, but will send it to-day.

653.

SIR,

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[Early in 1780.]

In examining this Book I find it necessary to add to the life the preface to the *British Enchanters*, and, you may add, if you will, the notes on *Unnatural Flights*².

I am,

Sir, &c.

Friday.

To Mr. Nicol [*sic*].

654.

DEAREST LADY,

TO MRS. THRALE³.

April 6, 1780.

You had written so often. I have had but two letters from

Warton said, but in that for October (p. 545). It, too, is about a Lady's tears; hence perhaps the confusion between the two poems. It is as follows:—

'When Phœbe form'd a wanton smile,

My soul! it reach'd not here:

Strange that thy peace, thou trembler,
flies

Before a rising tear!

From midst the drops my love is born,

That o'er those eyelids rove;

Thus issued from a teeming wave

The fabled queen of love.'

Johnson, I conjecture, mentions *Amasius* in his Letter, because in the August number there are some lines signed with that name which Nichols might have attributed to Collins. Hawkins says that Cave, the editor of the *Magazine*, showed him one day Collins's beautiful poem *To Fair Fidele's grassy tomb*. 'Cave,' he adds, 'could not be convinced of the propriety of the name Fidele; he

thought Pastora a better one, and so printed it.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 49. It is thus printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1749, p. 466. Johnson in 1765 published it in his edition of Shakespeare at the end of *Cymbeline*.

I have found the following entry among *The Orders of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press*:—

'February 8, 1769. Mr. Collins's Copy of Verses to Sir Thos. Hanmer to be inserted after the Preface [of Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare].'

¹ Sydenham, the great physician, whose Life Johnson has briefly written (*Works*, vi. 405) published his medical treatises in Latin.

² *The Essay on Unnatural Flights in Poetry* and *The British Enchanters* are by George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne. Neither the preface nor the notes are added to his *Life*. See *post*, Letter of August 8, 1780.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 95.

This letter is misdated 1779. Miss Bath,

Bath, and the second complains that the first, which you call so many, was neglected, and you pretend to be afraid of being forgotten. I wonder what should put you out of my mind. You say rightly, that I shall not find such another; for there is not, if I had the choice of all, such another to be found.

It is happy, both for you and Mrs. Montague¹, that the fates bring you both to Bath at the same time. Do not let new friends supplant the old; they who first distinguished you have the best claim to your attention; those who flock about you now, take your excellence upon credit, and may hope to gain upon the world by your countenance.

I have not quite neglected my Lives². Addison is a long one, but it is done. Prior is not short, and that is done too. I am upon Rowe, who cannot fill much paper³. If I have done them before you come again, I think to bolt upon you at Bath; for I shall not be now afraid of Mrs. Cotton⁴. Let Burney take care that she does me no harm.

Burney, writing from Bath on April 7, 1780, describes the journey. 'Mr. Thrale,' she says, 'was charmingly well and in very good spirits, and Mrs. Thrale must be charming, well or ill.' On their journey they slept one night at the Bear Inn, Devizes. They saw the landlord's son, 'a most lovely boy of ten years of age, who seems to be not merely the wonder of their family, but of the times, for his astonishing skill in drawing. We found that he had been taken to town, and that Sir Joshua Reynolds had pronounced him, the mother said, the most promising genius he had ever met with.' The boy was Thomas Lawrence, afterwards President of the Royal Academy. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 310, 312.

¹ 'I am very glad,' writes Miss Burney, 'at this opportunity of seeing so much of Mrs. Montagu; for, allowing a little for parade and ostentation, which her power in wealth and rank in literature offer some excuse for, her conversation is very agreeable;

she is always reasonable and sensible, and sometimes instructive and entertaining; and I think of our Mrs. Thrale, we may say, the very reverse, for she is always entertaining and instructive, and sometimes reasonable and sensible; and I write this because she is just now looking over me—not but what I think it too.' *Ib.* i. 325.

² 'In 1780, the world was kept in impatience for the completion of his *Lives of the Poets*, upon which he was employed so far as his indolence allowed him to labour.' *Life*, iii. 418.

³ In a note on the *Life of Rowe*, Nichols says:—'This *Life* is a very remarkable instance of the uncommon strength of Dr. Johnson's memory. When I received from him the MS. he complacently observed that the criticism was tolerably well done, considering that he had not read one of Rowe's plays for thirty years.' *Works*, vii. 417.

⁴ No doubt the Mrs. C——, a relation of Mrs. Thrale, whom Miss
The

The diligence of Dr. Moisy¹ I do not understand. About what is he diligent? If Mr. Thrale is well, or only not well because he has been ill, I do not see what the physician can do. Does he direct any regimen, or does Mr. Thrale regulate himself? Or is there no regularity among you? Nothing can keep him so safe as the method which has been so often mentioned, and which will be not only practicable but pleasant in the Summer, and before Summer is quite gone, will be made supportable by custom.

If health and reason can be preserved by changing three or four meals a week, or if such a change will but encrease the chances of preserving them, the purchase is surely not made at a very high price. Death is dreadful, and fatuity is more dreadful, and such strokes bring both so near, that all their terrors ought to be felt. I hope that to our anxiety for him, Mr. Thrale will add some anxiety for himself.

Seward called on me one day, and read Spence². I dined yesterday at Mr. Jodrell's³ in a great deal of company. On

Burney describes as 'an ugly, proud old woman, but marvellous civil to me.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 313. Mrs. Thrale says:—'Miss Burney was much admired at Bath (1780); the puppy-men said, "She had such a drooping air and such a timid intelligence"; or "a timid air," I think it was, "and a drooping intelligence," never sure was such a collection of pedantry and affection [*i.e.* affectation] as filled Bath when we were on that spot.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 341.

¹ Mrs. Thrale in one of her letters says:—'Oh, here comes Dr. Moysey, to talk about Whig and Tory, and the reign of King Charles the Second; how that style of conversation does wear one out, especially from a professional man, and when one is wishing to bring forward a subject really interesting.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 130. 'Abel Moysey, M.D. of Bath, died August 11, 1780, aged 64.' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.*, ix. 538.

² Spence's *Anecdotes* were published in 1820. Warburton, Joseph Warton, Johnson, and Malone had been allowed to read them in the manuscript, as we are told in the Preface. See *Life*, iv. 63. Johnson described Spence as 'a weak conceited man.' BOSWELL. 'A good scholar, Sir?' JOHNSON. 'Why, no, Sir.' BOSWELL. 'He was a pretty scholar.' JOHNSON. 'You have about reached him.' *Ib.* v. 317.

'He was,' writes Horace Walpole, 'a good-natured, harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle-faddle, bit of sterling, that had read good books and kept good company, but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child.' *Letters*, vii. 366.

³ Richard Paul Jodrell was the author of *The Persian Hercules, a Tragedy*, which, in Baker's *Biog. Dram.*, i. 400, is wrongly assigned to his son Sir R. P. Jodrell, M.D.

Sunday

Sunday I dine with Dr. Lawrence, and at night go to Mrs. Vesey. I have had a little cold, or two, or three, but I did not much mind them, for they were not very bad.

Make my compliments to my master, and Queeney, and Burney, and Mrs. Cotton, and to all that care about me, and more than all—or else.

Now one courts you, and another caresses you, and one calls you to cards, and another wants you to walk; and amidst all this, pray try to think now and then a little of me, and write often. Mrs. Strahan is at Bath, but, I believe, not well enough to be in the rooms.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

655.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], April 8, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 420.

656.

DEAR MADAM, TO MRS. PORTER¹. London, April 8, 1780.

I am indeed but a sluggish correspondent, and know not whether I shall much mend: however, I will try. I am glad that your oysters proved good, for I would have every thing good that belongs to you; and would have your health good, that you may enjoy the rest. My health is better than it has been for some years past; and, if I see Lichfield again, I hope to walk about it.

Your brother's request I have not forgotten. I have bought as many volumes as contain about an hundred and fifty sermons, which I will put in a box, and get Mr. Mathias to send him². I shall add a letter.

Nichols's *Lit. Anec.*, ix. 2. He was a member of Johnson's Essex Head Club (*Life*, iv. 254), and lived at 21, Portland Place, the house at present occupied by Mr. Alexander Macmillan, the publisher. Here it was that Johnson dined with him.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 643.

² He wrote four days later:—'I am sorry that Mr. Porter has not had his box; but by sending it to Mr. Mathias, who very readily undertook the conveyance, I did the best I

We have been lately much alarmed at Mr. Thrale's. He has had a stroke, like that of an apoplexy; but he has at last got so well as to be at Bath, out of the way of trouble and business, and is likely to be in a short time quite well. I hope all the Lichfield ladies are quite well, and that every thing is prosperous among them.

A few weeks ago I sent you a little stuff gown, such as is all the fashion at this time. Yours is the same with Mrs. Thrale's, and Miss bought it for us. These stuffs are very cheap, and are thought very pretty.

Pray give my compliments to Mr. Pearson, and to every body, if any such body there be, that cares about me.

I am now engaged about the rest of the Lives, which I am afraid will take some time, though I purpose to use despatch; but something or other always hinders. I have a great number to do, but many of them will be short.

I have lately had colds; the first was pretty bad, with a very troublesome and frequent cough; but by bleeding and physic it was sent away. I have a cold now, but not bad enough for bleeding.

For some time past, and indeed ever since I left Lichfield last year, I have abated much of my diet, and am, I think, the better for abstinence. I can breathe and move with less difficulty; and I am as well as people of my age commonly are. I hope we shall see one another again some time this year.

I am, dear love,

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

657.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

On Sunday I dined with poor Lawrence, who is deafer than ever². When he was told that Dr. Moisy visited Mr. Thrale, he

could.' *Life*, iv. 89. For Mathias see *ante*, i. 159, n. 4, and *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 307, 9.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 98.

² Dr. Lawrence had lost his wife

in January of this year. *Life*, iii. 418.

Two years later Johnson wrote:—

'Poor Lawrence has almost lost the sense of hearing; and I have lost the conversation of a learned, intelligent,

enquired,

enquired, for what? and said that there was nothing to be done, which Nature would not do for herself. On Sunday evening I was at Mrs. Vesey's, and there was enquiry about my master, but I told them all good. There was Dr. Barnard of Eaton, and we made a noise all the evening; and there was Pepys, and Wraxal till I drove him away¹. And I have no loss of my mistress, who laughs, and frisks, and frolicks it all the long day, and never thinks of poor Colin².

If Mr. Thrale will but continue to mend, we shall, I hope, come together again, and do as good things as ever we did; but perhaps you will be made too proud to heed me, and yet, as I have often told you, it will not be easy for you to find such another.

Queeney has been a good girl, and wrote me a letter; if Burney

and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Lawrence is one of the best men whom I have known.—*Nostrum omnium miserere Deus.* *Life*, iv. 143.

¹ For Bennet Langton's account of this evening see *Life*, iii. 424. Dr. Barnard was Provost of Eton College. 'He was,' said Johnson, 'the only man that did justice to my good breeding.' Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 36. Pepys, afterwards Sir William Weller Pepys, Baronet, was a Master in Chancery. His second son became Lord Chancellor and Earl of Cottenham. Samuel Pepys, the author of the *Diary*, was of the same family. Burke's *Peerage*, article Cottenham. Johnson speaking of Pepys, 'when they had been disputing about the classics for three hours together one morning at Streatham, said:—"I knew the dog was a scholar; but that he had so much taste and so much knowledge I did not believe. I might have taken Barnard's word though, for Barnard would not lie."' Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 142. Pepys, when he was eighty-four years old, told Mme. D'Arblay that he and

Hannah More were the only survivors of the original set of the *Bas Bleu*. *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 263. Wraxall was the author of the *Historical Memoirs of My Own Time*. He was perhaps thinking of this evening when he wrote:—"Those whom Johnson could not always vanquish by the force of his intellect, by the depth and range of his arguments, and by the compass of his gigantic faculties, he silenced by rudeness; and I have myself more than once stood in the predicament which I here describe. Yet no sooner was he withdrawn, and with him had disappeared these personal imperfections, than the sublime attainments of his mind left their full effect on the audience: for such the whole assembly might be in some measure esteemed while he was present." *Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 147.

² 'Then to her new love let her go;
And deck her in golden array;
Be finest at every fine show
And frolic it all the long day.'
ROWE. *Colin's Complaint*. Campbell's *British Poets*, ed. 1845, p. 334. See *post*, p. 139, n. 1.

said

said she would write, she told you a fib. She writes nothing to me. She can write home fast enough. I have a good mind not to let her know, that Dr. Bernard¹, to whom I had recommended her novel, speaks of it with great recommendation; and that the copy which she lent me, has been read by Dr. Lawrence three times over. And yet what a gypsey it is. She no more minds me, than if I were a Brangton². Pray speak to Quceney to write again.

I have had a cold and a cough, and taken opium, and think I am better. We have had very cold weather; bad riding weather for my master, but he will surmount it all. Did Mrs. Browne make any reply to your comparison of business with solitude, or did you quite down her³? I am much pleased to think that

¹ Dr. Barnard.

² Miss Burney writes on April 13:—‘Dr. Johnson has sent a bitter reproach to Mrs. Thrale of my not writing to him, for he has not yet received a scrawl I have sent him. He says Dr. Barnard, the Provost of Eton, has been singing the praises of my book.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, i. 323. The Branghtons are the family of a silversmith of Snow Hill, described in Miss Burney’s *Evelina*, Letter xvii. In her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 193, she describes a visit Boswell paid to Streatham soon after *Evelina* had been published. At lunch he had left his seat and placed himself behind Johnson’s chair. ‘The Doctor turned angrily round upon him, and clapping his hand rather loudly upon his knee said in a tone of displeasure, “What do you do there, Sir? Go to the table, Sir.” Boswell presently recollected something that he wished to exhibit, and was running away in its search, when the Doctor calling after him said, “What are you thinking of, Sir? Why do you get up before the cloth is removed? Come back to your place, Sir.” Again, and with equal

obsequiousness, Mr. Boswell did as he was bid; when the Doctor, pursing his lips, not to betray rising risibility, muttered half to himself:—“Running about in the middle of meals! One would take you for a Branghton!” “A Branghton, Sir?” repeated Mr. Boswell with earnestness. “What is a Branghton, Sir?” “Where have you lived, Sir,” cried the Doctor laughing, “and what company have you kept not to know that?” Mr. Boswell, now doubly curious, yet always apprehensive of falling into some disgrace with Dr. Johnson, said in a low tone to Mrs. Thrale:—“Pray, Ma’am, what’s a Branghton? Do me the favour to tell me. Is it some animal hereabouts?” Mrs. Thrale only laughed heartily, but without answering. But Mr. Seward cried:—“I’ll tell you, Boswell,—I’ll tell you—if you will walk with me into the paddock; only let us wait till the table is cleared: or I’ll shall be taken for a Branghton too.”

Boswell forgot to record this scene in the *Life*.

³ Mrs. Thrale writing to Johnson on May 9, says: ‘Why Mrs. Browne

Mrs. Cotton

Mrs. Cotton thinks me worth a frame, and a place upon her wall. Her kindness was hardly within my hope, but time does wonderful things. All my fear is, that if I should come again, my print would be taken down. I fear I shall never hold it.

Who dines with you? Do you see Dr. Woodward or Dr. Harrington¹? Do you go to the house where they write for the myrtle²? You are at all places of high resort, and bring home hearts by dozens; while I am seeking for something to say about men of whom I know nothing but their verses, and sometimes very little of them. Now I have begun, however, I do not despair of making an end. Mr. Nicholls holds that Addison is the most *taking* of all that I have done. I doubt they will not be done before you come away.

Now you think yourself the first writer in the world for a letter about nothing. Can you write such a letter as this? So miscellaneous, with such noble disdain of regularity, like Shakespeare's works; such graceful negligence of transition, like the ancient enthusiasts? The pure voice of nature and of friendship. Now of whom shall I proceed to speak? Of whom but Mrs. Montague? Having mentioned Shakespeare and Nature, does not the name of Montague force itself upon me³? Such were

should be called a Methodist you must tell; for 'tis considered always a term of reproach, I trust; because I never yet did hear that any one person called himself a Methodist.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 119. For *downing* see *ante*, ii. 73, n. 6.

¹ Dr. Woodward called this morning. He is a physician here, and a chatty, agreeable man. At dinner we had Dr. Harrington, another physician. It is his son who published those remains of his ancestor, Sir John Harrington, under the title of *Nugæ Antiquæ*. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 317, 341. See *Life*, iv. 180.

² Lady Miller 'held a Parnassus-fair every Thursday' at her villa at Bath-Easton. 'A Roman vase, dressed with pink ribands and myrtles, received the poetry.' Wal-

pole's *Letters*, vi. 171. Miss Burney records in her *Diary* at this time:— 'Do you know now that, notwithstanding Bath-Easton is so much laughed at in London, nothing here is more tonish than to visit Lady Miller. She is a round, plump, coarse-looking dame of about forty, and while all her aim is to appear an elegant woman of fashion, all her success is to seem an ordinary woman in very common life, with fine clothes on.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 364.

³ Mr. Croker takes this humorous passage as serious praise. 'Compare,' he writes, 'this with two former phrases in which Shakespeare and Mrs. Montagu are mentioned, and wonder at the inconsistencies to which the greatest genius and the the

the transitions of the ancients, which now seem abrupt, because the intermediate idea is lost to modern understandings. I wish her name had connected itself with friendship; but, ah Colin, thy hopes are in vain¹. One thing however is left me, I have still to complain²; but I hope I shall not complain much while you have any kindness for me. I am,

Dearest and dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

London, April 11, 1780.

SAM: JOHNSON.

You do not date your letters³.

658.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

April 15, 1780.

I did not mistake Dr. Woodward's case; nor should have

highest spirit may be reduced! Perhaps Johnson's original disposition to depreciate Mrs. Montagu may have arisen from his having heard that she thought *Rasselas* an *opiate* (*Carter's Letters*, iii. 108). His later praise was no doubt produced by her charity to Mrs. Williams. This, though it may explain, does not excuse the inconsistencies.' Croker's *Boswell*, p. 644. It almost passes belief that such nonsense as this should have been written by a man of intelligence, and should have been repeated in succeeding editions. Johnson despised Mrs. Montagu's *Essay on Shakespeare* because it is as worthless as it is pretentious.

¹ 'What though I have skill to complain,

Though the Muses my temples have crown'd;

What though, when they hear my soft strain,

The virgins sit weeping around?

Ah, Colin! thy hopes are in vain,

Thy pipe and thy laurel resign,

Thy false one inclines to a swain

Whose music is sweeter than thine.'

ROWE. Campbell's *British Poets*, ed. 1845, p. 334.

As early as September, 1778, Johnson said that he believed that he was not in Mrs. Montagu's good graces. *Life*, iv. 64, n. 1. In 1781 his *Life of Lyttelton* 'produced a declaration of war against him from her.' He said, 'Mrs. Montagu has dropped me. Now, Sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by.' *Ib.* iv. 64, 73. Miss Burney, writing to him on November 19, 1783, recalls a saying of his about her outcry. 'What, as you said of a certain great lady, signifies the barking of a lap-dog, if once the lion puts out his paw?' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 357.

² Johnson, no doubt quoting Rowe, wrote, 'I have *skill* to complain.'

³ Johnson himself in early life had not always been careful to date his letters. *Life*, i. 122, 3. He often urges Mrs. Thrale to date hers, but with no result.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 102.

wanted

wanted any explanation. But broken¹ is a very bad word in the city.

Here has just been with me * * * ², who has given—What has he given? Nothing, I believe, gratis. He has given fifty-seven lessons this week. Surely this is business.

I thought to have finished Rowe's life to-day, but I have five or six visitors who hindered me; and I have not been quite well. Next week I hope to dispatch four or five of them.

It is a great delight to hear so much good of all of you. Fanny³ tells me good news of you, and you speak well of Fanny; and all of you say what one would wish of my master. And my sweet Queeney, I hope is well. Does she drink the waters? *One glass* would do her as much good as it does her father⁴.

You and Mrs. M—— must keep Mrs. * * * about you; and try to make a wit of her⁵. She will be a little unskilful in her first essays; but you will see how precept and example will bring her forwards.

Surely it is very fine to have your powers. The wits court you, and the Methodists love you⁶, and the whole world runs about you; and you write me word how well you can do without me: and so, go thy ways poor Jack⁷.

That sovereign *glass of water* is the great medicine; and though his legs are too big, yet my master takes a glass of water. This is bold practice. I believe, under the protection of a glass of water drank⁸ at the pump, he may venture once a-week upon a stew'd lamprey⁹.

¹ 'The King's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.'

Richard II, Act ii. sc. 1. l. 257.

² Perhaps Dr. Burney.

³ Miss Burney.

⁴ Mrs. Thrale wrote in reply:—'I think the *one* glass of water which you scorn so has an effect [on Mr. Thrale], and that not a good one—it gives dizziness.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 131.

⁵ Mrs. Piozzi fills up the blanks with the names of Montagu and Byron. *Hayward's Piozzi*, i. 319.

⁶ *Ante*, ii. 137, n. 3.

⁷ 'Old Jack.' *Ante*, ii. 125, n. 2.

⁸ Johnson in his *Dictionary* gives *drunk* and *drunken* as the past participle of *to drink*; but in a quotation which he gives from Arbuthnot we find 'he had drank.'

⁹ Lampreys, it should seem, were a favourite dish with Mr. Thrale. Mrs. Piozzi says that when Johnson once urged temperance, 'he answered him only by inquiring when lamprey season would come in.' *Hayward's Piozzi*, i. 303.

I wish

I wish you all good; yet know not what to wish you which you have not. May all good continue and increase.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

659.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, April 18, 1780.

Of the petticoat government I had never heard². Of the Shakespeare, I was once told by Miss Lawrence; and that is all that I know of it. I have not seen nor heard of any body that has seen the wonders. You may be sure I should tell you any thing that would gratify your curiosity, and furnish you for your present expences of intellectual entertainment. But of this dramattick discovery I know nothing³.

I cannot see but my master may with stubborn regularity totally recover. But surely, though the invasion has been repelled from life, the waste it has made will require some time and much attention to repair it. You must not grow weary of watching him, and he must not grow impatient of being watched.

Pray, of what wonders do you tell me? You make verses, and they are read in publick, and I know nothing about them. This very crime, I think, broke the link of amity between Richardson and Miss M——⁴, after a tenderness and confidence of many years. However, you must do a great deal more before I leave you for Lucan⁵ or Montague, or any other charmer; if any other charmer would have me.

I am sorry that you have seen Mrs. W——⁶. She and her

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 104.

² Johnson refers to petticoat government, *post*, pp. 151, 2. It is possible that some political pamphlet had lately been brought out under that title, in imitation of one by John Dunton in 1702.

³ Perhaps 'the Shakespeare' was Malone's *Supplement to the Edition of Shakespeare's Plays by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*, published this year.

⁴ 'Miss Mulso.' BARETTI. Miss Mulso is better known as 'the admirable Mrs. Chapone.' She was one of the literary ladies who sat at Richardson's feet. I cannot find any account of this quarrel in Richardson's *Correspondence*, ed. by Mrs. Barbauld.

⁵ Lady Lucan. *Ante*, ii. 65.

⁶ Most probably the lady mentioned *ante*, ii. 128.

husband

husband exhibited two very different appearances of human nature. But busy, busy, still art thou¹. He prevailed on himself to treat her with great tenderness; and to show how little sense will serve for common life, she has passed through the world with less imprudence than any of her family.

Sir Philip's bill has been rejected by the Lords. There was, I think, nothing to be objected to it, but the time at which it was proposed, and the intention with which it was projected. It was fair in itself, but tended to weaken government when it is too weak already².

* * * * has no business about you, but to be taught. Poor B —'s³ tenderness is very affecting. Comfort her all you can. I sincerely wish her well. Declining life is a very awful scene.

¹ 'But busy, busy still art thou
To bind the loveless, joyless vow,
The heart from pleasure to delude,
To join the gentle to the rude.'

A Song. Thomson's *Works*, ed. 1775, ii. 268. It is Fortune who is so cruelly busy.

² Miss Burney records in February 1779 that one day at Streatham Sir Philip J. Clerk, 'a professed minority man,' described 'a bill he had in agitation against contractors. Dr. Johnson at first scoffed at it; Mr. Thrale betted a guinea it would not pass, and Sir Philip that he should divide a hundred and fifty upon it. Dr. Johnson having made more particular inquiries into its merits first softened towards it, and then declared it a very rational and fair bill, and joined with Mrs. Thrale in soliciting Mr. Thrale's vote. Sir Philip was quite delighted. He opened upon politics more amply, and declared his opinions, which were so much bordering upon the republican principles that Dr. Johnson suddenly took fire; he called back his recantation, and begged Mr. Thrale not to vote for the bill. "It ought," said he, "to be opposed by all honest men. In itself and

considered simply, it is equitable, and I would forward it; but when we find what a faction it is to support and encourage, it ought not to be listened to. All men should oppose it who do not wish well to sedition.'" Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 192. The bill, which is known as the Contractors' Bill, was to restrain any member of parliament from being concerned in any Government contract unless the contract were made at a public bidding. Leave to bring it in was carried by 158 to 143, so that Sir Philip won his guinea. It was lost however upon the motion for referring it to a Committee. *Parl. Hist.*, xx. 124. The following year it was carried without a division, but it was lost in the Lords. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 153, 181. It was brought in again in March, 1782, and was carried through both Houses. *Ann. Reg.*, 1782, i. 308, and Chitty's *Statutes*, iv. 1124, ed. 1880, where the date is wrongly given as 1749. In 1801 after the Union a similar provision was made for Ireland by 41 George III, c. 52, sec. 4.

³ Probably Mrs. Byron. *Ante*, ii. 121, n. 2. See Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 317, 331.

Please

Please to tell Mr. Thrale, that I think I grow rather less; and that I was last week almost dizzy with vacuity. I repeat my challenge to alternate diet¹; and doubt not but both of us, by adhering to it, may live more at ease, and a much longer time.

Though I am going to dine with Lady Craven²,

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

660.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR³.

DEAR SIR,

The quantity of blood taken from you appears to me not

¹ The challenge has not been given in any previous letter. Each, I conjecture, was to abstain from animal food, every other day. See *post*, pp. 147, 164, 181.

² 'The beautiful, gay and fascinating Lady Craven,' as Boswell calls her. 'Lord Macartney,' he adds, 'told me that he met Johnson at her house, and that he seemed jealous of any interference. "So (said his Lordship smiling) *I kept back*.'" *Life*, iii. 22. She was the daughter of the fourth Earl of Berkeley, and wife first of the sixth Lord Craven and afterwards of the Margrave of Anspach. In 1825 she published her *Memoirs*. Walpole's Letters, ix. 75, n. i.

³ First published in the Catalogue of Mr. Alfred Morrison's Autographs, ii. 343.

This Letter, though it is dated 1778, must have been written in 1780, improbable as it seems that Johnson should have fallen into such a blunder. Thrale's first attack was in June, 1779, when he was in extreme danger. *Ante*, p. 93; *Life of Johnson*, iii. 397, and Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 299 (where 1770 is a misprint for 1779); ii. 28. Johnson had the remission of the convulsions which he mentions

on June 18, 1779. He recorded on June 18, 1780:—'In the morning of this day last year I perceived the remission of those convulsions in my breast which had distressed me for more than twenty years. I returned thanks at church for the mercy granted me, which has now continued a year.'—*Prayers and Meditations*, p. 183.

Three days later he wrote to Mrs. Thrale:—

'It was a twelvemonth last Sunday since the convulsions in my breast left me. I hope I was thankful when I recollected it; by removing that disorder a great improvement was made in the enjoyment of life.' *Post*, Letter of June 21, 1780.

He was at Ashbourne on June 18, 1779. *Life*, iii. 453.

On April 20, 1778, the very day of which this letter bears the date, he recorded:—

'After a good night, as I am forced to reckon, I rose seasonably. . . . In reviewing my time from Easter, 1777, I found a very melancholy and shameful blank. So little has been done that days and months are without any trace. My health has, indeed, been very much interrupted. My nights have been commonly not only sufficient.

sufficient. Thrale was almost lost by the scrupulosity¹ of his physicians, who never bled him copiously till they bled him in despair; he then bled till he fainted, and the stricture or obstruction immediately gave way and from that instant he grew better.

I can now give you no advice but to keep yourself totally quiet and amused with some gentle exercise of the mind. If a suspected letter comes, throw it aside till your health is re-established; keep easy and cheerful company about you, and never try to think but at those stated and solemn times when the thoughts are summoned to the cares of futurity, the only real cares of a rational Being.

As to my own health I think it rather grows better; the convulsions which left me last year at Ashbourne have never returned, and I have by the mercy of God very comfortable nights. Let me know very often how you are, till you are quite well.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

London, April 20, 1778 [? 1780].

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

661.

TO DR. BURNEY².

Mr. Johnson received an invitation from Mrs. Ord for tomorrow, and having forgotten her street, desires to be informed

restless, but painful and fatiguing. . . . Some relaxation of my breast has been procured, I think, by opium, which, though it never gives me sleep, frees my breast from spasms.—*Prayers and Meditations*, p. 169.

¹ See *Life*, iv. 5, n. 2, for instances of Johnson's use of *scrupulosity*, which was remarked on by Sir William Jones. Adam Smith I have found using the word in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. 1801, ii. 49, where he describes the prudent man as 'respecting with an almost

religious scrupulosity all the established decorums and ceremonials of society,' and a second time, p. 334, where he writes of 'a frivolous and weak scrupulosity of conduct.'

² From the original in the possession of Mr. Millin Chamberlain of the Boston Public Library, Boston, United States.

As there is nothing to fix the date of this letter I enter it here, because in the next letter Johnson for the first time mentions his having visited Mrs. Ord. Hannah More describes where

where she lives. If Dr. Burney goes to-morrow, Mr. Johnson will call on him, and beg the favour of going with him.

Wednesday.

To Dr. Burney—or any Burney¹.

662.

DEAR MADAM, TO MRS. THRALE².

Mr. E——³ and Mr. P——⁴ called on me to-day with your letter to the electors, and another which they had drawn up, to serve in its place. I thought all their objections just, and all their alterations proper. You had mentioned his sickness in terms which gave his adversaries advantage, by confirming the report which they already spread with great industry, of his infirmity and inability. You speak, in their opinion, and in mine, with too little confidence in your own interest. By fearing, you teach others to fear. All this is now avoided, and it is to take its chance.

how, in 1780, she went to one of that lady's assemblies at a time when 'the mourning for some foreign Wilhelmina Jaqueline was not over. Every human creature was in deep mourning, and I, poor I, all gorgeous in scarlet. Even Jacobite Johnson was in deep mourning.' *Life and Correspondence of Hannah More*, i. 170.

¹ One of the last letters which Johnson wrote was on his return to London less than a month before his death, in which he says:—'Mr. Johnson who came home last night sends his respects to dear Dr. Burney and all the dear Burneys, little and great.' *Life*, iv. 377. See also *post*, Letter of November 14, 1781.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 106.

On April 6 Dunning's famous motion 'that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished' had been carried by a majority of 18—233 to 215. 'The blow seems to me decisive,' wrote Horace Walpole two

days later. *Letters*, vii. 348. On the 11th he wrote:—'Religious prophets were more prudent than I; they commonly formed their predictions *after* events, not before. . . . Not but the Administration was beaten again yesterday; yet only by two.' *Ib.*, p. 349. On the 25th, the date of Johnson's letter, he wrote:—'Dunning moved yesterday to address the King that the Parliament might not be prorogued or dissolved till the demands of the petitions [respecting an economical reform, &c.] are satisfied. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. . . . The session will probably end much sooner than was expected.' *Ib.*, p. 357. Parliament was dissolved in the following September. *Parl. Hist.* xxi. 767.

³ 'Mr. Evans.' BARETTI. *Post*, p. 154.

⁴ 'Mr. Perkins.' BARETTI. See *Life*, iii. 440, for an address to the Electors written for Thrale by Johnson.

How do you think I live? On Thursday I dined with Hamilton¹, and went thence to Mrs. Ord². On Friday, with much company at Reynolds's. On Saturday, at Dr. Bell's³. On Sunday, at Dr. Burney's, with your two sweets from Kensington, who are both well; at night came Mrs. Ord, Mr. Harris⁴, and Mr. Greville⁵, &c. On Monday, with Reynolds⁶, at night with Lady Lucan; to-day with Mr. Langton; to-morrow with the Bishop of St. Asaph⁷; on Thursday with Mr. Bowles⁸; Friday, —; Saturday, at the Academy⁹; Sunday, with Mr. Ramsay¹⁰.

I told Lady Lucan how long it was since she sent to me; but she said I must consider how the world rolls about her. She seemed pleased that we met again¹¹.

The long intervals of starving I do not think best for Mr. Thrale, nor perhaps for myself, but I knew not how to attain any thing better; and every body tells me that I am very well, and I think there now remains not much cause for complaint: but O for a glass, once in four-and-twenty hours, of warm water! Can warm water be had only at Bath, as steam was to be found

¹ William Gerard Hamilton.

² Perhaps it was the evening described by Hannah More. 'I was the other night at Mrs. Ord's. Everybody was there, and in such a crowd I thought myself well off to be wedged in with Mr. Smelt, Langton, Ramsay and Johnson. Johnson told me he had been with the King that morning, who enjoined him to add Spenser to his *Lives of the Poets*. I seconded the motion; he promised to think of it, but said the booksellers had not included him in their list of the poets.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 174. Of this interview with the King nothing more is known than we learn here.

³ Probably the Rev. Dr. Bell, Prebendary of Westminster. *Life*, ii. 204, *n.* 1. See *ante*, i. 118; ii. 62, *n.* 2.

⁴ 'Hermes' Harris, 'a sound sullen scholar,' but 'a prig and a bad prig.' *Life*, iii. 245. Miss Burney describes

him as 'a most charming old man.' *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 97. Perhaps this Sunday evening at Dr. Burney's Johnson heard 'a little concert,' as the Dean of Winchester had heard one on a Sunday evening a few years earlier, and was not shocked. *Ib.* ii. 114.

⁵ Richard Fulke Greville. *Ante*, i. 60, *n.* 2.

⁶ 'Reynolds's pocket-book has "4. Dr. Johnson, Lady Lucan."' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 287. '4,' I suppose, is the hour of the dinner.

⁷ Dr. Shipley. *Ante*, i. 400.

⁸ Johnson visited him in 1783 at his seat at Heale, near Salisbury. *Life*, iv. 234.

⁹ *Post*, p. 150.

¹⁰ Allan Ramsay, the portrait painter, son of Allan Ramsay, the poet, a man who could give 'a splendid dinner.' *Life*, iii. 336.

¹¹ *Ante*, ii. 65, 111.

only at Knightsbridge¹. Nature distributes her gifts, they say, variously, to show us that we have need of one another; and in her bounty she bestowed warm water upon Bath, and condemned the inhabitants of other places, if they would warm their water, to make a fire. I would have the young ladies take half a glass every third day, and walk upon it.

I not only scour the town from day to day, but many visitors come to me in the morning; so that my work makes no great progress, but I will try to quicken it. I should certainly like to bustle a little among you, but I am unwilling to quit my post till I have made an end².

You did not tell me in your last letter how Mr. Thrale goes on. If he will be *ruled, for aught appears, he may live on these hundred years*³. Fix him when he comes in alternate diet.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

London, April 25, 1780.

SAM: JOHNSON.

Now there is a date; look at it.

663.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

Mr. Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to abstain by rule. I lived on potatoes on Friday, and on spinach to-day; but I have had, I am afraid, too many dinners

¹ For the glass of hot water, see *ante*, ii. 140. 'I knew a lady,' said Johnson, 'who came up from Lincolnshire to Knightsbridge with one of her daughters, and gave five guineas a week for a lodging and a warm bath; that is, mere warm water. *That*, you know, could not be had in *Lincolnshire*!' She said, it was made either too hot or too cold there.' *Life*, v. 286.

² Of his *Lives*.

³ 'Had he been ruled, for aught appears,

He might have lived these twenty years.'

On the death of Dr. Swift. Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 245.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 109.

Boswell gives in the *Life*, iii. 421, a letter from Mrs. Thrale to Johnson, dated April 28 of this year, thus prefacing it:—'shall present my readers with one of her original letters to him at this time, which will amuse them probably more than those well-written but studied epistles which she has inserted in her collection, because it exhibits the easy vivacity of their literary intercourse.' He gives moreover part of Johnson's reply—the letter in the text.

of late. I took physick¹ too both days, and hope to fast to-morrow. When he comes home, we will shame him, and Jebb² shall scold him into regularity. I am glad, however, that he is always one of the company, and that my dear Queeney is again another. Encourage, as you can, the musical girl³.

Nothing is more common than mutual dislike where mutual approbation is particularly expected. There is often on both sides a vigilance not over benevolent; and as attention is strongly excited, so that nothing drops unheeded, any difference in taste or opinion, and some difference where there is no restraint will commonly appear, it [*sic*] immediately generates dislike⁴.

Never let criticisms operate upon your face or your mind; it is very rarely that an author is hurt by his criticks⁵. The blaze of reputation cannot be blown out, but it often dies in the socket; a very few names may be considered as perpetual lamps that shine unconsumed. From the author of Fitzosborne's Letters⁶

¹ By *physick* Johnson in these Letters always, I think, means 'a purge.' In his *Dictionary* he defines *physick*, in its third meaning, as 'in common phrase, a purge.'

² Sir Richard Jebb. Horace Walpole writing of him on Jan. 29 of this year says:—'Sir Richard Jebb pronounced the poor girl in a consumption; but he is such a raven that I did not believe him, nor do.' *Letters*, vii. 320. Miss Burney wrote the following year:—'Dr. Johnson is very good and very clubable, but Sir R. Jebb is quite a scourge to me. He is so haughty, so impracticable a creature.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 9.

³ Mrs. Thrale had written:—'Poor Queeney's sore eyes have just released her; she had a long confinement, and could neither read nor write, so my master treated her very good-naturedly with the visits of a young woman in this town, a tailor's daughter, who professes musick, and teaches so as to give six lessons a

day to ladies, at five and threepence a lesson. Miss Burney says she is a great performer; and I respect the wench for getting her living so prettily: she is very modest and pretty-mannered, and not seventeen years old.' *Life*, iii. 422.

⁴ Mrs. Thrale had written:—'Yesterday's evening was passed at Mrs. Montagu's: there was Mr. Melmoth, I do not like him *though*, nor he me; it was expected we should have pleased each other; he is, however, just Tory enough to hate the Bishop of Peterborough for Whiggism, and Whig enough to abhor you for Toryism.' *Ib.*

⁵ Mrs. Thrale had written:—'I felt my regard for you in my face last night when the criticisms were going on.' *Ib.* For the silence with which attacks should be met, see *Life*, ii. 61, *n.* 4.

⁶ Mr. Melmoth, 'Pliny' Melmoth as he was called. *Ib.* iii. 422, *n.* 2; iv. 272, *n.* 4.

I cannot think myself in much danger. I met him only once about thirty years ago, and in some small dispute reduced him to whistle; having not seen him since, that is the last impression. Poor Moore the fabulist¹ was one of the company.

Mrs. Montague's long stay, against her own inclination, is very convenient. You would, by your own confession, want a companion; and she is *par pluribus*, conversing with her you may find variety in one².

At Mrs. Ord's I met one Mrs. B——³, a travelled lady, of great spirit, and some consciousness of her own abilities. We had a contest of gallantry an hour long, so much to the diversion of the company, that at Ramsay's last night, in a crowded room, they would have pitted us again. There were Smelt⁴, and the Bishop of St. Asaph, who comes to every place⁵; and Lord Monboddo⁶, and Sir Joshua, and ladies out of tale.

¹ The author of *Fables for the Female Sex*, and of the tragedy of *The Gamester*, and editor of *The World*. Goldsmith, in his *Present State of Polite Learning* (ch. x.), after describing the sufferings of authors, continues:—'Let us not then aggravate those natural inconveniences by neglect; we have had sufficient instances of this kind already. Sale and Moore will suffice for one age at least. But they are dead, and their sorrows are over.'

² 'For here the false unconstant lover,

After a thousand beauties shown,

Does new surprising charms discover,

And finds variety in one.'

The Spectator, No. 470.

³ Mrs. Buller. Miss Burney describes her as 'tall and elegant in her person; she is a famous Greek scholar, a celebrated traveller upon the Continent to see customs and manners; and a woman every way singular for her knowledge and enter-

prising way of life.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 243. H. C. Robinson describes her in 1811 as 'a most accomplished lady of the old school. The poems of Scott and Southey she has put into her *Index Expurgatorius*. She cannot bear the irregularity of their versification.' H. C. Robinson's *Diary*, i. 321. See also *ib.* p. 392.

⁴ Leonard Smelt was sub-governor to the Prince of Wales (George IV). For his 'singular virtues and character' see Walpole's *Memoirs of George III*, iv. 312. He is often mentioned in Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*.

⁵ 'Dr. Johnson disapproved of bishops going to routs, at least of their staying at them longer than their presence commanded respect. He mentioned a particular bishop. "Poh! (said Mrs. Thrale) the Bishop of —— is never minded at a rout." *Life*, iv. 75. The Bishop of St. Asaph was most likely the one censured.

⁶ See *Life*, v. 74, for Johnson's visit
The

The exhibition, how will you do, either to see or not to see! The exhibition is eminently splendid. There is contour, and keeping, and grace, and expression, and all the varieties of artificial excellence¹. The apartments were truly very noble. The pictures, for the sake of a sky light, are at the top of the house; there we dined, and I sat over against the Archbishop of York²

to Monboddo's house in 1773. 'I knew they did not love each other,' writes Boswell. When they met in 1784 at a friend's house Boswell observed that 'Monboddo avoided any communication with Johnson.' *Ib.* iv. 273, n. 1. Beattie mentions 'Monboddo's hatred of Johnson, though he never heard Johnson say anything severe of him.' Forbes's *Beattie*, p. 333. Monboddo's conceit might have provoked ridicule. Lord Hailes says in a note:—'Lord Monboddo said to me, 23 Dec. 1789, I have *forgotten* more of antiquities than any man now living knows, *idque addito juramento sanxit*.' Hist. MSS. Comm. 1874, p. 532. Johnson moreover might have laughed at him as a wooer, for 'he had lately [written of April, 1782] proposed twice, without success, to Mrs. Garrick.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 361.

¹ Mrs. Thrale replied:—'When did I ever plague you about contour, and grace, and expression? I have dreaded them all three since that hapless day at Compeigne, when you teized me so, and Mr. Thrale made what I hoped would have proved a lasting peace.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 116.

² The Royal Academy this year, for the first time, held its Exhibition in Somerset House. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 288. Horace Walpole wrote early in May:—'You know, I suppose, that

the Royal Academy at Somerset House is opened. It is quite a Roman palace, and finished in perfect taste as well as boundless expense. It would have been a glorious apparition at the conclusion of the great war; now it is an insult on our poverty and degradation.' *Letters*, vii. 359.

'Mr. Seward saw Dr. Johnson presented to the Archbishop of York, and described his *Bow to an ARCH-BISHOP*, as such a studied elaboration of homage, such an extension of limb, such a flexion of body, as have seldom or ever been equalled.' *Life*, iv. 198. Jeremy Bentham, who had been under the Archbishop when he was Master of Westminster School, thus describes him:—'Our great glory was Dr. Markham; he was a tall portly man, and "high he held his head." He married a Dutch woman, who brought him a considerable fortune. He had a large quantity of classical knowledge. His business was rather in courting the great than in attending to the school. Any excuse served his purpose for deserting his post. He had a great deal of pomp, especially when he lifted his hand, waved it, and repeated Latin verses. If the boys performed their tasks well, it was well; if ill, it was not the less well. We stood prodigiously in awe of him; indeed he was an object of adoration.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 30.

See

See how I live when I am not under petticoat government¹.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, May 1, 1780.

Mark that—you did not put the year to your last².

664.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

MADAM,

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, May 7, 1780.

Mr. P——⁴ has just been with me, and has talked much talk, of which the result is, that he thinks your presence necessary for a few days. I have not the same fulness of conviction; but your appearance would certainly operate in your favour, and you will judge better what measures of diligence and of expence are necessary. Money, Mr. P—— says, must be spent; and he is right in wishing that you be made able to judge how far it is spent properly. Perhaps, it is but perhaps, some desire that I have of seeing you, makes me think the better of his reasons. Can you leave Master? Can you appoint Mrs. —— governess? If you can, the expence of coming is nothing, and the trouble not much; and therefore it were better gratify your agents. Levy behaves well.

I dined on Wednesday with Mr. Fitzmaurice, who almost made me promise to pass part of the Summer at Llewenny⁵. To-morrow I dine with Mrs. Southwel⁶; and on Thursday with Lord Lucan. To-night I go to Miss Monkton's⁷. Thus I

¹ *Ante*, ii. 141, n. 2.

² She had succeeded in putting the day of the month—April 28.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 112.

⁴ 'Perkins.' BARETTI.

⁵ Johnson with the Thrales had stayed at Llewenny Hall in Denbighshire in 1774. It was then the residence of Mrs. Thrale's cousin Robert Cotton, *Life*, v. 435. In her utter indifference to dates and accuracy she said that it had stood a thousand years. Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 206. It was afterwards bought

by the Hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice, brother of the Earl of Shelburne. Pennant's *Wales*, ed. 1810, ii. 144. For Johnson's intimacy with the Earl see *Life*, iv. 191. See also *ante*, ii. 81.

⁶ For the Southwells see *ante*, i. 205, n. 3.

⁷ 'The lively Miss Monkton (now Countess of Corke), who used to have the finest *bit of blue* at the house of her mother, Lady Galway,' *Life*, iv. 108. The *bit of blue* is an allusion to the Blue-stocking Club. *Ib.*

scramble,

scramble, when you do not quite shut me up ; but I am miserably under petticoat government, and yet am not very weary, nor much ashamed.

Pray tell my two dear girls that I will write to both of them next week ; and let Burney know that I was *so* angry—

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

I know of Mrs. Desmoulines' letter¹. It will be a great charity. Let me know when you are to come.

665.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, May 8, 1780.

Would you desire better sympathy—At the very time when you were writing, I was answering your letter.

Having seen nobody since I saw Mr. P——³, I have little more to say, than when I wrote last. My opinion is, that you should come for a week, and shew yourself, and talk in high terms ; for it will certainly be propagated with great diligence, that you despair and desist ; and to those that declare the contrary, it will be answered, Why then do they not appear ? To this no reply can be made that will keep your friends in countenance. A little bustle and a little ostentation will put a stop to clamours, and whispers, and suspicions of your friends, and calumnies of your opponents. Be brisk, and be splendid, and be publick. You will probably be received with much favour ; and take from little people the opportunity which your absence gives them of magnifying their services, and exalting their importance. You may have more friends and fewer obligations.

It is always necessary to shew some good opinion of those whose good opinion we solicit. Your friends solicit you to come ; if you do not come, you make them less your friends, by disregarding their advice. Nobody will persist long in helping those that will do nothing for themselves.

¹ For Mrs. Desmoulines, see *ante*,
ii. 42, n. 2.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 114.

³ 'Perkins.' BARETTI.

The voters of the Borough are too proud and too little dependant to be solicited by deputies ; they expect the gratification of seeing the candidate bowing or curtseying before them. If you are proud, they can be sullen¹.

Such is the call for your presence ; what is there to withhold you ? I see no pretence for hesitation. Mr. Thrale certainly shall not come ; and yet somebody must appear whom the people think it worth the while to look at².

Do not think all this while that I want to see you.—I dine on Thursday at Lord Lucan's, and on Saturday at Lady Craven's ; and I dined yesterday with Mrs. Southwel.

As to my looks at the Academy, I was not told of them ; and as I remember, I was very well, and I am well enough now, and am,

Dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

666.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, May 9, 1780.

This morning brought me the honour of a visit from Sir Philip⁴, who has been to survey Streatham, and thinks it will be long before you can return thither ; which he considers as a loss to himself of many pleasant days which your residence might have afforded. We then talked about our mistress, and ——⁵ ; and I said you had most wit, and most literature.

¹ 'A Borough election,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'once showed me Mr. Johnson's toleration of boisterous mirth. A rough fellow, a hatter by trade, seeing his beaver in a state of decay seized it suddenly with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the other, "Ah, Master Johnson," says he, "this is no time to be thinking about hats." "No, no, Sir," replies our Doctor in a cheerful tone, "hats are of no use now, as you say, except to throw up in the air and huzza with," accompanying his words with the true election halloo.' *Piozzi's*

Anecdotes, p. 214.

² Johnson wrote on October 17 :— 'Mr. Thrale's loss of health has lost him the election.' *Life*, iii. 442.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 124.

⁴ Sir Philip Jennings Clerk. *Ante*, ii. 5 n. 2.

⁵ 'Mrs. Montagu for a penny.' BARETTI. 'As to Mrs. Montagu she reasons well, and harangues well, but wit she has none. Mrs. Thrale has almost too much ; for when she is in spirits it bursts forth in a torrent almost overwhelming.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 335.

Mr. Evans

Mr. Evans¹ brought me your letter, to which I had already sent the answer; nor have I any thing to add, but that the more I reflect, and the more I hear, the more I am convinced of the necessity of your presence. Your adversaries will be for ever saying, that you despair of success, or disdain to obtain it by the usual solicitation. Either of these suppositions generally received ruins your interest, and your appearance confutes both.

Cette Anne si belle,
Qu'on vante si fort,
Pourquoi ne vient t'elle?
Vraiment elle a tort.

While you stay away your friends have no answer to give.

Mr. P——, as I suppose you know, has refused to join with H——², and is thought to be in more danger than Mr. Thrale.

Of ——'s letter, I would have you not take any notice; he is a man of no character.

My Lives creep on. I have done Addison, Prior, Rowe, Granville, Sheffield, Collins, Pitt, and almost Fenton. I design to take Congreve next into my hand. I hope to have done before you can come home, and then whither shall I go³?

What comes of my dear, sweet, charming, lovely, pretty, little Queeney's learning⁴? This is a sad long interruption, and

¹ *Ante*, i. 393, n. 2.

² Mr. P—— was Nathaniel Polhill, Thrale's colleague; H—— was Sir Richard Hotham. At the close of the poll on September 15, the numbers were:—

Hotham . . . 1177

Polhill . . . 1025

Thrale . . . 769

Annual Register, 1780, i. 227.

³ On August 21 Johnson wrote to Boswell:—'I have sat at home in Bolt-court, all the summer, thinking to write the *Lives*, and a great part of the time only thinking. Several of them, however, are done, and I still think to do the rest.' *Life*, iii. 435. They were finished in March, 1781. *Ib.* iv. 34.

⁴ He was thinking of the Latin lessons which he gave her. *Ante*, ii. 98, n. 2. Miss Burney nine months earlier describes her as 'coldly civil as usual.' Of her singing she says:—'Her voice is very sweet, and will improve with practice. She has much to *do*, but nothing to *undo*; however, "*Manca l'anima, e l'anima sempre mancherà*.'" *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 257, 9. Charlotte Burney, writing of her two years later, says:—'Miss Thrale was to my no small astonishment civil to me, and sat by me the whole evening. She has taken it into her head to be civil to people this winter, I hear.' *Ib.* p. 306.

the wicked world will make us no allowance, but will call us —.

Lady Lucan says, she hears Queeney is wonderfully accomplished, and I did not speak ill of her.

Did I tell you that Scot and Jones both offer themselves to represent the University in the place of Sir Roger Newdigate¹. They are struggling hard for what others think neither of them will obtain.

I am not grown fat. I did thrive a little, but I checked the pernicious growth, and am now small as before.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

667.

TO THE REVEREND THOMAS WARTON².

SIR,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, May 9, 1780.

I have your pardon to ask for an involuntary fault. In a parcel sent from Mr. Boswell I found the enclosed letter, which, without looking on the direction, I broke open; but, finding

¹ Newdigate, who had been member since 1751 (*Parl. Hist.* xiv. 76), was retiring. To obtain the seat Jones 'would,' he said, 'have cheerfully sacrificed to it not only an Indian Judgeship of six thousand a year, but a Nabobship with as many millions.' Finding however that he had no chance of success he withdrew, and offered to support Dr. Scott (afterwards Lord Stowell). *Life of Sir W. Jones*, pp. 216, 228, 231. Scott also withdrew, and Sir William Dolben and Francis Page were elected without opposition. Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, September 16, 1780. It is not the only time in the history of the University that the men of acres have triumphed over the men of learning. In the *Parl. Hist.* xxi. 780 Newdigate is wrongly entered as elected in 1780. Scott in 1801 succeeded Page.

Horace Walpole wrote to Mason in 1780:—'Mr. Jones, the orientalist, is candidate for Oxford. On Tuesday was se'nnight Mrs. Vesey presented him to me. The next day he sent me an absurd and pedantic letter, desiring I would make interest for him. I answered it directly, and told him I had no more connection with Oxford than with the Antipodes, nor desired to have.' He adds:—'The man, it seems, is a staunch Whig, but very wrong-headed.' *Letters*, vii. 361. It seems strange to our notions that the strength of a staunch Whig should lie, as Jones said his did, 'among the non-resident voters.' *Life of Jones*, p. 224.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 647.

For Thomas Warton see *Life*, i. 270.

I did

I did not understand it, soon saw it belonged to you. I am sorry for this appearance of a fault, but believe me it is only the appearance. I did not read enough of the letter to know its purport.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

668.

TO THE REVEREND DR. JOSEPH WARTON¹.

DEAR SIR,

May 23, 1780.

It is unnecessary to tell you how much I was obliged by your useful memorials. The shares of Fenton and Broome in the *Odyssey* I had before from Mr. Spence. Dr. Warburton did not know them². I wish to be told, as the question is of great importance in the poetical world, whence you had your intelligence; if from Spence, it shows at least his consistency; if from any other, it confers corroboration. If any thing useful to me should occur, I depend upon your friendship. Be pleased to make my compliments to the ladies of your house, and to the gentleman that honoured me with the Greek Epigrams, when I had, what I hope sometime to have again, the pleasure of spending a little time with you at Winchester³.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obliged

and most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ First published in Wooll's *Memoirs of Dr. Warton*, page 390.

² 'Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton and eight to Broome.' In a note 'he mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors. . . . A natural curiosity after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to inquire of Dr.

Warburton, who told me in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note "a lie"; but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 230. See also *ib.* pp. 56, 273, 338.

³ For Johnson's visit, see *Life*, i. 496, *n.* 2; iii. 367.

669.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

May 23, 1780.

Your letter told me all the good news. Mr. Thrale well, Queeney good, and yourself not so ill but that you know how to be made well; and now — is gone², you have the sole and undivided empire of Bath; and you talk to many whom you cannot make wiser, and enjoy the foolish face of praise³.

But —⁴ and you have had, with all your adulations, nothing finer said of you than was said last Saturday night of Burke and me. We were at the Bishop of —'s, a bishop little better than *your* bishop⁵; and towards twelve we fell into talk, to which the ladies listened, just as they do to you: and said, as I heard, *there is no rising unless somebody will cry fire*.

I was last night at Miss Monkton's; and there were Lady Craven and Lady Cranburne, and many ladies and few men. Next Saturday I am to be at Mr. Pepys's⁶, and in the intermediate time am to provide for myself as I can.

You cannot think how doggedly I left your house on Friday

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 127.

Mrs. Thrale had returned to London from Bath on electioneering business. 'Let me see you at the Borough-house as soon as I get there,' she wrote to Johnson on May 9. 'Everybody says I must come up directly.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 122. Miss Burney, who had accompanied her, describes her as 'involved in business, electioneering, canvassing and letter-writing.' On the morning of their return to Bath, 'we rose,' she writes, 'at four o'clock, and when we came down stairs, to our great surprise found Dr. Johnson waiting to receive and breakfast with us.' They reached Bath that same day. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 354.

² 'Mrs. Montagu we miss cruelly.' *Ib.* p. 357.

³ Pope. *Prologue to the Satires*, l. 212.

⁴ Miss Burney.

⁵ The first Bishop was most likely the Bishop of St. Asaph, and the second Hinchliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, who was at Bath. 'He adores, and is adored in return by Mrs. Thrale.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 356.

⁶ For Miss Monkton see *ante*, ii. 151, *n.* 7, and for Lady Craven, ii. 143. Lady Cranbourne's husband succeeded his father this year as seventh Earl of Salisbury. In 1789 he was created Marquis. She met a miserable end in the fire which burnt the west wing of Hatfield House on November 27, 1835. Her grandson is the present Marquis. For Pepys, see *ante*, ii. 136, *n.* 1.

My

morning, and yet Mrs. Abbess gave me some mushrooms; but what are mushrooms without my mistress?

My master has seen his hand-bill¹; will he stand to it? I have not heard a word from the Borough since you went away.

Dr. Taylor is coming hastily to town, that he may drive his lawsuit forward. He seems to think himself very well. This lawsuit will keep him in exercise, and exercise will keep him well. It is to be wished that the law may double its delays. If Dr. Wilson dies, he will take St. Margaret's, and then he will have the bustle of the parish to amuse him². I expect him every day.

I am, dear Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

670.

TO JOHN NICHOLS³.

[? May, 1780.]

In reading Rowe in your edition, which is very impudently called mine, I observed a little piece unnaturally and odiously obscene. I was offended, but was still more offended when I could not find it in Rowe's genuine volumes. To admit it had been wrong; to interpolate it is surely worse. If I had known of such a piece in the whole collection, I should have been angry. What can be done?

¹ No doubt his Address to the Electors. *Ante*, ii. 145.

² For Dr. Taylor's law-suit in 1776, see *ante*, i. 379. Dr. Wilson had the living of St. Margaret's, Westminster. He lived nearly four years longer. *Post*, p. 163, and Letter of May 13, 1784.

³ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 10.

Johnson, it must be remembered, was not the editor of *The English Poets*. 'The edition,' writes Boswell, 'for which he was to write Prefaces and Lives, was not an

undertaking directed by him: he was to furnish a Preface and Life to any poet the booksellers pleased. I asked him if he would do this to any dunce's works, if they should ask him. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; and say he was a dunce." *Life*, iii. 137. Nichols says in a note to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, that the piece of which Johnson complained 'has not only appeared in the *Works* of Rowe, but has been transplanted by Pope into the *Miscellanies* he published in his own name and that of Dean Swift.'

TO

671.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

[May 24, 1780.]

Mr. Johnson is obliged to Mr. Nicol for his communication, and must have Hammond again. Mr. Johnson would be glad of Blackmore's Essays for a few days.

672.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Here has been Dr. Lawrence with me, and I showed him your letter; and you may easily believe we had some talk about my master³. He said, however, little that was new, except this, which is of great importance, that if ever he feels any uncommon sensation in his head, such as, heaviness, pain, or noise, or giddiness, he should have immediate recourse to some evacuation, and thinks a cathartick most eligible. He told me a case of a lady, who said she felt a dizziness, and would bleed; to bleed, however, she neglected, and in a few days the dizziness became an apoplexy. He says, but do not tell it, that the use of Bath water, as far as it did any thing, did mischief. He presses abstinence very strongly, as that which must do all that can be done; and recommends the exercise of walking, as tending more to extenuation⁴ than that of riding.

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 10.

Johnson says of Blackmore's Essays that 'they can be commended only as they are written for the highest and noblest purpose, the promotion of religion. Blackmore's prose is not the prose of a poet; for it is languid, sluggish, and lifeless; his diction is neither daring nor exact, his flow neither rapid nor easy, and his periods neither smooth nor strong. His account of wit will show with how little clearness he is content to think, and how little his thoughts

are recommended by his language.' *Works*, viii. 43.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 135.

³ Mrs. Thrale had written that 'the one glass of water,' which Mr. Thrale took every day at Bath, caused dizziness. *Ib.* ii. 131.

⁴ Dr. Norman Moore, whom I have consulted on this passage, informs me that he thinks Johnson means by 'extenuation' *reduction of fat*. In his *Dictionary* he defines *to extenuate*, in its fifth meaning, as *to make lean*. See *post*, Letter of October 27, 1781, where it seems to mean 'loss of flesh.'

— has

—¹ has let out another pound of blood, and is come to town, brisk and vigorous, fierce and fell, to drive on his lawsuit. Nothing in all life now can be more *profligater* than what he is; and if, in case, that so be, that they persist for to resist him, he is resolved not to spare no money, nor no time². He is, I believe, thundering away. His solicitor has turned him off; and I think it not unlikely that he will tire his lawyers. But now don't you talk.

My dear Queney, what a good girl she is. Pray write to me about her, and let me know her progress in the world. Bath is a good place for the initiation of a young lady. She can neither become negligent for want of observers, as in the country; nor by the imagination that she lies concealed in the crowd, as in London. Lady Lucan told me, between ourselves, how much she had heard of Queeny's accomplishments; she must therefore now be careful, since she begins to have the public eye upon her.

A lady has sent me a vial, like Mrs. Nesbit's³ vial, of essence of roses. What am I come to?

Congreve, whom I dispatched at the Borough while I was attending the election⁴, is one of the best of the little lives; but then I had your conversation.

You seem to suspect that I think you too earnest about the success of your solicitation: if I gave you any reason for that suspicion, it was without intention. It would be with great discontent that I should see Mr. Thrale decline the representation of the Borough, and with much greater should I see him ejected. To sit in Parliament for Southwark, is the highest honour that his station permits him to attain⁵; and his ambition to attain it,

¹ Dr. Taylor. *Ante*, ii. 158. He was in the habit of having himself bled periodically. *Life*, iii. 152.

² 'This was the elegant phraseology of that doctor.' BARETT.

³ Mrs. Nesbitt was Mr. Thrale's sister. *Ante*, i. 219, *n.* 3.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 157, *n.* 1.

⁵ Brewers had not as yet been made peers. Mrs. Piozzi, in a letter

to Johnson just after her second marriage, said, it is stated:—'My second husband is a gentleman, which is more than could be said of my first.' Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 66. Boswell, where he first speaks of Mr. Thrale, after mentioning his great wealth, says:—'There may be some who think that a new system of gentility might be established upon prin-

is surely rational and laudable. I will not say that for an honest man to struggle for a vote in the legislature, at a time when honest votes are so much wanted, is absolutely a duty, but it is surely an act of virtue. The expence, if it was more, I should wish him to despise¹. Money is made for such purposes as this. And the method to which the trade is now brought, will, I hope, save him from any want of what he shall now spend.

Keep Mr. Thrale well, and make him keep himself well, and put all other care out of your dear head.

Sir Edward Littleton's business with me was to know the character of a candidate for a school at Brewood in Staffordshire; to which, I think, there are seventeen pretenders².

ciples totally different from what have hitherto prevailed.' After stating 'the specious but false arguments' for such a proposition he continues:— 'To refute them is needless. The general sense of mankind cries out with irresistible force, "*Un gentil-homme est toujours gentilhomme.*"' *Life*, i. 491. Boswell seems at times to mark his sense of Mr. Thrale's inferiority by speaking of him as Thrale and his house as Thrale's. He never, I believe, is thus familiar in the case of Beauclerk, Burke, Langton, and Reynolds.

¹ See *Life*, ii. 153, where Johnson says:— 'A very rich man from low beginnings may buy his election in a borough; but, *ceteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred;' and v. 106, where he says that 'the Nabob will carry an election by means of his wealth in a country where money is highly valued, as it must be where nothing can be had without money.' In Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ed. 1826, i. 405, is given an account of Sheridan's 'Expenses at the Borough of Stafford for Election, Anno 1784.' The first entry is

248 Burgesses paid £5 5s. each. . . .
£1302.

² Johnson records that when he was at Hagley in 1774 he met at dinner Sir Edward Littleton of Staffordshire. *Life*, v. 457. With Sir Edward's death the baronetcy expired. He was succeeded in his estates by his grand-nephew, who in 1835 was created Baron Hatherton. Burke's *Peerage*.

Johnson himself forty-four years earlier had sought the post, not of master, but of an assistant to the master of Brewood School. *Life*, iv. 407, n. 4.

Pretender he merely defines as 'one who lays claim to anything.' Its present meaning of 'one who falsely lays claim to a thing' he does not mention. The title of *Pretender* therefore when first applied to the son of James II was nothing more than *Claimant*. By the time Boswell published his *Tour to the Hebrides*, and no doubt much earlier, it had acquired its secondary and offensive meaning. Boswell speaking of Charles Edward says:— 'I do not call him the *Pretender*, because it appears to me as an insult to one who is still alive, and, I suppose, thinks very differently.' *Life*, v. 185.

Do not I tell you every thing? what wouldst thou more of man? It will, I fancy, be necessary for you to come up once again at least, to fix your friends and terrify your enemies. Take care to be informed, as you can, of the ebb or flow of your interest; and do not lose at Capua the victory of Cannæ. I hope I need not tell you, dear Madam, that

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Thursday, May 25, 1780.

No. 8, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, London.

Look at this, and learn¹.

673.

TO THE REVEREND DR. FARMER.

[London] May 25, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 427.

674.

TO HENRY THRALE².

DEAR SIR,

London, May 30, 1780.

You never desired me to write to you, and therefore cannot take it amiss that I have never written. I once began a letter, in which I intended to exhort you to resolute abstinence; but I rejoice now that I never sent, nor troubled you with advice which you do not want. The advice that is wanted is commonly unwelcome, and that which is not wanted is evidently impertinent.

The accounts of your health, and of your caution, with which I am furnished by my mistress, are just such as would be wished, and I congratulate you on your power over yourself, and on the success with which the exercise of that power has been hitherto rewarded. Do not remit your care; for in your condition it is certain that security³ will produce danger.

You always used to tell me, that we could never eat too little; the time is now come to both of us, in which your position is verified. I am really better than I have been for twenty years

¹ She was to learn to date her letters.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 139.

³ Johnson gives as the first meaning of *security*, 'carelessness; freedom from fear.'

past¹; and if you persist in your present laudable practice, you may live to tell your great-grandchildren the advantages of abstinence.

I have been so idle, that I know not when I shall get either to you, or to any other place; for my resolution is to stay here till the work is finished, unless some call more pressing than I think likely to happen should summon me away. Taylor, who is gone away brisk and jolly, asked me when I would come to him, but I could not tell him. I hope, however, to see standing corn in some part of the earth this Summer, but I shall hardly smell hay, or suck clover flowers².

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

675.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

You mistake about Dr. Taylor's claim upon the Abbey; the prebends are equal, but the senior prebendary has his choice of the livings that are in the gift of the chapter, of which St. Margaret's is one; which if Wilson dies, he may take if he pleases⁴. He went home lusty and stout; having bustled ably about his lawsuit, which at last, I think, he will not get.

Mr. Thrale, you say, was pleased to find that I wish him well; which seems therefore to be a new discovery. I hoped he had known for many a year past that nobody can wish him better. It is strange to find that so many have heard of his fictitious relapse, and so few of his continual recovery.

And you think to run me down with the Bishop and Mrs. Carter, and Sir James⁵; and I know not whether you may not

¹ See *post*, p. 181. It is worthy of notice that the great improvement in Johnson's health took place in the years when he was at work on the *Lives of the Poets*. It is very likely that the occupation, by keeping his mind from dwelling so much on itself, had benefited his bodily health.

² He lost both his summer and his autumn ramble this year, though he

did visit Brighton in October. *Life*, iii. 453.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 141.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 158.

⁵ The Bishop was the Bishop of Peterborough. *Ante*, ii. 157, *n.* 5. Miss Burney, who was introduced to Mrs. Carter at Bath, describes her as 'really a noble-looking woman; I never saw age so graceful in the win

win a heat, now the town grows empty. Mrs. Vesey suspects still that I do not love them since that *skrimage*¹. But I bustle pretty well, and shew myself here and there, and do not like to be quite lost. However, I have as many invitations to the country as you; and I do not mind your breakfasts, nor your evenings.

Langton is gone to be an engineer at Chatham²; and I suppose you know that Jones and Scot oppose each other for what neither will have³.

If Mr. Thrale at all remits his vigilance, let the Doctor loose upon him. While he is watched he may be kept from mischief, but he never can be safe without a rule; and no rule will he find equal to that which has been so often mentioned, of an alternate diet⁴; in which, at least in this season of vegetation, there is neither difficulty nor hardship.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

London, No. 8, Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

SAM: JOHNSON.

June 6, 1780⁵.

Mind this, and tell Queeney.

female sex yet; her whole face seems to beam with goodness, piety and philanthropy.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 373. Sir James was probably the same man as Sir J. C—who invited far more people to his party than his rooms would hold; 'a bawling old man.' *Ib.* pp. 367, 376.

¹ Neither *skrimage* nor *scrimmage* is in Johnson's *Dictionary*. It is the same word as *skirmish*. The 'skrimage,' I suppose, was the party where he and Dr. Barnard 'made a noise all the evening.' *Ante*, ii. 136.

² He was an officer in the Lincolnshire militia. *Life*, iii. 360. Jones, writing in the autumn of this year, says:—'At Chatham I sought in vain for Mr. Langton among the new ravelines and counterscarps.' *Life of Sir William Jones*, p. 235. He took a house at Rochester, where Johnson visited him in 1783. *Life*, iv.

232. Johnson defines *engineer* as 'one who manages engines; one who directs the artillery of an army.'

³ *Ante*, ii. 155.

⁴ 'Nobody ever had spirit enough to tell him that his fits were apoplectic; such is the blessing of being rich that nobody cares to speak out.'—BARETTI. For 'alternate diet' see *ante*, ii. 143.

⁵ It is strange that Johnson does not mention the Gordon Riots, of which he gives an account in his next letter to Mrs. Thrale. Miss Burney recorded on June 9:—'Dr. Johnson has written to Mrs. Thrale, without even mentioning the existence of this mob; perhaps at this very moment he thinks it "a humbug upon the nation," as George Bodens called the parliament.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 401. The riot was rising to its worst while Johnson

TO

678.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ¹.

DEAR SIR,

Just as you went away you asked me whether I thought mercury would do you any good ². I never had considered it before, but the mention of it made an impression upon me, and I am of opinion, that as your disorders apparently arise from an obstructed circulation, mercury may help you. I would have you try it cautiously, by adding two grains of calomel to your pill at night. Thus taken, it will remain in your body all night, and will be directed downwards in the morning. So small a quantity can have no sudden effect, good or evil, but if in a month you think yourself better continue it, if worse, leave it off, and rid yourself of it by a brisk purge. I hope it will do good. You will add very little to the bulk of your pill, and taste it has none, and as it is combined with a purgative it can never accumulate. Let me know whether you take it or not.

Be sure, whatever else you do, to keep your mind easy, and do not let little things disturb it ³. Bustle about your hay and your cattle, and keep yourself busy with such things as give you little solicitude.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate St [servant],

June 6, 1780. London.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

was writing, but no doubt he had posted his letter before Newgate was attacked. That in the midst of the general alarm he should have passed the whole tumult over in silence, and insisted on the importance of accurately dating a letter, is certainly a curious trait of character. Perhaps he did not want to alarm Mr. Thrale. In his Letter to Dr. Taylor of the same day he is equally reticent.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. J. C. Brooks of Newcastle on Tyne.

² For Johnson's 'dabbling in

physic' see *Life*, iii. 152. Miss Burney wrote of him on September 14, 1781:—'Dr. Johnson has been very unwell indeed. Once I was quite frightened about him; but he continues his strange discipline—starving, mercury, opium; and though for a time half demolished by its severity, he always in the end rises superior both to the disease and the remedy, which commonly is the most alarming of the two.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 107.

³ For the art of managing the mind see *Life*, ii. 440; iii. 164.

To

677.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, [Friday] June 9, 1780.

To the question, Who was impressed with consternation? it may with great truth be answered, that every body was impressed, for nobody was sure of his safety².

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 143.

The riots described in this and the next few letters were caused by Protestant bigotry. The severe penal provisions against the Roman Catholics had been relaxed so far as England was concerned by an Act passed the year before. Popish priests, or Papists keeping school, were no longer liable to perpetual imprisonment. The Catholics were still subject to all the penalties created in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, Charles II, and in the first ten years of William III. Scotland was alarmed by the report that the Scotch Catholics were in like manner to be relieved. The spirit of bigotry broke out there into acts of violence and cruelty, and the Government was timid and feeble. The success of these Scotch bigots seems to have given rise to the Protestant Association in England, of which Lord George Gordon was the head. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 254-6: 1781, i. 237. Horace Walpole wrote on February 11, 1779:—‘The good people of Edinburgh have set but an ugly example. There has been a serious insurrection against the Papists, and two mass-houses were burnt, and the Provost quieted the tumult only by promising that the toleration of Popery should not be extended to Scotland.’ *Letters*, vii. 174. On March 18 Burke, attacking the supineness of the Ministers towards the Scotch rioters, ‘hoped that Government was not dead but only asleep.

At this moment he looked directly at Lord North who was asleep, and said in the Scripture phrase, “Brother Lazarus is not dead but sleepeth.” The laugh was not more loud on one side of the House than on the other.’ *Parl. Hist.*, xx. 326. Horace Walpole, to his disgrace, ‘always disliked and condemned the repeal of the Popish statutes. . . . Papists and liberty are contradictions.’ *Letters*, vii. 378; viii. 426. Gibbon wrote on June 27:—‘The month of June, 1780, will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism which I had supposed to be extinct, but which actually subsists in Great Britain, perhaps beyond any other country in Europe.’ *Misc. Works*, ii. 241.

² Horace Walpole wrote on June 7:—‘Yet I assure your Ladyship there is no panic. Lady Aylesbury has been at the play in the Haymarket, and the Duke and my four nieces at Ranelagh this evening.’ *Letters*, vii. 388. The following Monday he wrote:—‘Mercy on us! we seem to be plunging into the horrors of France, in the reigns of Charles VI and VII!—yet, as extremes meet, there is at this moment amazing insensibility. Within these four days I have received five applications for tickets to see my house!’ *Ib.* p. 395. Gibbon, who lived in Bentinck Street, Manchester Square, wrote on June 8:—‘Our part of the town is as quiet as a country village.’ *Misc. Works*, ii. 240.

On

On Friday [June 2] the good Protestants met in St. George's Fields, at the summons of Lord George Gordon, and marching to Westminster, insulted the Lords and Commons, who all bore it with great tameness¹. At night the outrages began by the demolition of the mass-house² by Lincoln's Inn.

An exact journal of a week's defiance of government I cannot give you. On Monday, [June 5], Mr. Strahan, who had been insulted, spoke to Lord Mansfield, who had I think been insulted too, of the licentiousness of the populace; and his Lordship treated it as a very slight irregularity³. On Tuesday night

¹ Horace Walpole wrote on June 3:—'I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. . . . The Duke of Gloucester had reached the House with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. . . . Mr. Conway and Lord F. Cavendish told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out sword in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.' *Walpole's Letters*, vii. 375-7. The poet Crabbe describes how he met 'a resolute band of vile-looking fellows, ragged, dirty, and insolent, armed with clubs, going to join their companions' at Westminster. *Crabbe's Works*, ed. 1834, i. 82.

² 'He means the Sardinian Chapel, as it is commonly called. But so illiberal was Johnson made by religion that he calls here that chapel a *Mass-house*, by way of contempt, alluding to the names of *bun-house*, *chop-house*, *slaughter-house*, and other such; yet he hated the Presbyterians.'—BARETTI. Johnson used the common

term—the one used by Horace Walpole (see last note). In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1767, p. 141, there is an account of two 'private mass-houses' which were entered by the peace-officers. The Sardinian Chapel was attached to the house of the Sardinian Minister in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The House and Chapel of Count Haslang, in Golden Square, were also plundered. 'As,' writes Horace Walpole, 'he is a Prince of Smugglers as well as Bavarian Minister, great quantities of run tea and contraband goods were found in his house. This one cannot lament; and still less, as the old wretch has for these forty years usurped a hired house, and, though the proprietor for many years has offered to remit his arrears of rent, he will neither quit the house nor pay for it.' *Letters*, vii. 381. It was no doubt by an abuse of the protection which he enjoyed as a Foreign Minister that he was able to swindle his landlord.

³ Johnson wrote to Boswell:—'Mr. Strahan got a garrison into his house, and maintained them a fortnight; he was so frightened that he removed part of his goods.' *Life*, iii. 435. Strahan was to have sat this week to Sir Joshua Reynolds for his portrait; but 'the appointments between Monday and Thursday have they

they pulled down Fielding's house, and burnt his goods in the street¹. They had gutted on Monday Sir George Savile's house, but the building was saved². On Tuesday [June 6] evening, leaving Fielding's ruins, they went to Newgate to demand their companions who had been seized demolishing the chapel. The keeper could not release them but by the Mayor's permission, which he went to ask; at his return he found all the prisoners released, and Newgate in a blaze³. They then went to Bloomsbury and fastened upon Lord Mansfield's house, which they pulled down; and as for his goods, they totally burnt them. They have since gone to Cane-wood, but a guard was there before them⁴. They plundered some Papists, I think, and burnt a mass-house in Moorfields the same night.

a pen drawn through them.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 302. Horace Walpole describes how at the riot at Westminster on the 2nd, 'Lord Mansfield, whose [carriage] glasses had been broken, quivered on the wool-sack like an aspen.' *Letters*, vii. 376. 'He was the Speaker *pro-tempore* in the absence of the Lord Chancellor.' *Parl. Hist.*, xxi. 665. Lord Campbell praises his great courage this day. *Lives of the Chief Justices*, ed. 1849, ii. 521. He mentions, however, his 'want of moral courage.' *Ib.* p. 576. It seems likely that his answer to Strahan was due to his timidity. See *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. 125.

¹ Sir John Fielding, half-brother of Henry Fielding, the novelist, was blind from birth; nevertheless he had been associated with his brother as assisting-magistrate for Middlesex and Westminster, and succeeded him on his death. His house was in Bow Street. He outlived the riot only three months, and died on September 4 of this year. *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, xviii. 424.

² Savile had brought into Parliament the bill in favour of the Catholics.

He lived in Leicester Fields. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 260. 'The rails torn from his house were the chief weapons and instruments of the mob.' Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 402. Reynolds, who lived in the same Square, most likely witnessed the scene of destruction.

³ Crabbe, who was present, says:— 'I saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the street in their chains.' Crabbe's *Works*, i. 83. There were about three hundred prisoners in all. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 260.

⁴ 'Wednesday, five o'clock, June 7. George Selwyn came into my chaise in a fury, and told me Lord Mansfield's house is in ashes, and that five thousand men were marched to Caen Wood—it is true, and that one thousand of the Guards are gone after them. . . . Caen Wood is saved; a regiment on march met the rioters. . . . June 9, at night. My bosom, I think, does not want humanity, yet I cannot feel pity for Lord Mansfield. I did feel joy for the four convicts who were released

On

On Wednesday [June 7] I walked with Dr. Scot¹ to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed, in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place². On Wednesday they

from Newgate within twenty-four hours of their execution; but ought not a man to be taught sensibility who drove us cross the Rubicon? I would not hurt a hair on his head; but if I sigh for the afflicted innocent, can I blend him with them? . . . June 10. How poor a sketch I have given of what Guicciardini would have formed a folio! yet we would forget the wretched wives and mothers that will rue that night, and expatiate on the precious manuscripts burnt in Bloomsbury [in Lord Mansfield's house]. Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 385, 6, 392, 7. Jeremy Bentham, speaking of an old friend, said:—'I remember joining him to deplore the loss of Lord Mansfield's manuscripts by the mob; I should now think such a loss a gain.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 51. Dr. Warner wrote to George Selwyn on June 8:—'Barnard's Inn—what remains of it—Thursday morning, 5 o'clock. The fire they say is stopped, but what a rueful scene has it left behind! *Sunt lachrymæ rerum*, indeed: the sentence that struck me upon picking up a page of Lord Mansfield's Virgil yesterday, in Bloomsbury Square. *Sortes Virgilianæ!*^a' *Selwyn and his Contemporaries*, iv. 334. Lord Mansfield, with a touch of eloquence which must have deeply moved his hearers, when giving his opinion in the House of Lords on the lawfulness of employing

soldiers for quelling riots, said:—'I have not consulted books;—Indeed I have no books to consult.' *Parl. Hist.*, xxi. 694. Caen Wood is close to Hampstead Heath. In the *Wentworth Papers*, p. 298, it is said that 'it was sold in 1712 by Lord Berkeley of Stratton to Lord Blantire for £4,000.'

¹ Dr. Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell. His younger brother John, afterwards Lord Eldon, with the other 'youngsters at the Temple armed themselves as well as they could, and drew up in the court ready to follow out a troop of soldiers who were there on guard. When however they had passed through the gate it was,' he continues, 'suddenly shut in our faces, and locked; and the officer in command shouted from the other side, "Gentlemen, I am much obliged to you for your intended assistance; but I do not choose to allow my soldiers to be shot, so I have ordered you to be locked in."' Twiss's *Eldon*, ed. 1846, i. 83.

Johnson's house was only a few minutes' walk from Newgate.

² 'Not two in all London could resolve of joining to each other in their own defence. The English gave me a very mean idea of themselves upon that occasion.'—BARETTI. At Bath there was just as much cowardice as at London. Miss

^a *Sortes Virgilianæ* is a mode of divination. He who would try it opens Virgil by chance, and from the line which first catches his eye divines some future event.

broke open the Fleet, and the King's-bench, and the Marshalsea, and Woodstreet-counter, and Clerkenwell Bridewell, and released all the prisoners.

At night they set fire to the Fleet, and to the King's-bench, and I know not how many other places; and one might see the glare of conflagration fill the sky from many parts. The sight was dreadful¹. Some people were threatened; Mr. Strahan advised me to take care of myself. Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing.

The King said in council, that the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own; and a proclamation was published, directing us to keep our servants within doors, as the peace was now to be preserved by force². The soldiers were sent out to different parts, and the town is now at quiet.

What has happened at your house you will know, the harm is only a few butts of beer; and I think you may be sure that the

Burney, describing the burning of the Roman Catholic Chapel in that town, says:—'The rioters do their work with great composure, and though there are knots of people in every corner all execrating the authors of such outrages, nobody dares oppose them.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 403.

¹ 'Wednesday night, past two in the morning, June 7. I was at Gloucester House between nine and ten. The servants announced a great fire, we went to the top of the house, and beheld not only one but two vast fires.' Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 386. Sir John Macpherson, who was at Downing Street this same night, says:—'Lord North accompanied by us all mounted to the top of the house, where we beheld London blazing in seven places, and could hear the platoons regularly firing in various directions.' Wraxall's *Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 336.

² 'June 5. Have you faith enough in me to believe that the sole

precaution taken was, that the Cabinet Council on Thursday empowered the First Lord of the Treasury to give proper orders to the civil magistrates to keep the peace,—and his Lordship forgot it! . . . June 9. The Magistrates intimidated by the demolition of Fielding's and Justice Hyde's houses, did not dare to act. A general Council was summoned at Buckingham House, at which the twelve judges attended. It was determined not to shut up the Courts, but to order military execution.' Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 380, 391. For the Proclamation see *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 265. The following General Order was issued from the Adjutant-General's Office on June 7:—'In obedience to an order of the King in Council the military to act without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates, and to use force for dispersing the illegal and tumultuous assemblies of the people.' *Ib.* p. 266.

danger

danger is over. There is a body of soldiers at St. Margaret's Hill¹.

Of Mr. Tyson I know nothing, nor can guess to what he can allude; but I know that a young fellow of little more than seventy, is naturally an unresisted conqueror of hearts².

Pray tell Mr. Thrale that I live here and have no fruit, and if he does not interpose, am not likely to have much; but I think he might as well give me a little, as give all to the gardener³.

Pray make my compliments to Queeney and Burney.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Johnson wrote to Boswell on August 21:—‘In the late disturbances, Mr. Thrale’s house and stock were in great danger; the mob was pacified at their first invasion, with about fifty pounds in drink and meat; and at their second, were driven away by the soldiers.’ *Life*, iii. 435. The Brewery was saved by the management of Perkins, the Superintendent. ‘Perkins,’ Johnson wrote on June 15, ‘seems to have managed with great dexterity.’ *Post*, p. 178. Miss Burney, who was at Bath with the Thrales, has the following entries in her Diary. ‘Saturday [June 10]. Mrs. Thrale had letters from Sir P. Clerk and Mr. Perkins to acquaint her that her town-house had been three times attacked, but was at last saved by guards,—her children, plate, money and valuables all removed. Streatham also threatened, and emptied of all its furniture. The same morning we saw a Bath and Bristol paper in which Mr. Thrale was asserted to be a Papist. . . . Perhaps he may himself be a marked man for the fury of the mob. We are going directly from Bath, and intend to stop only at villages. All

the Catholics in the town have privately escaped.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, i. 399, 403. The Thrales fled to Brighton, whence Mrs. Thrale went to Streatham. On her return she wrote to Miss Burney on June 29:—‘My master was not displeased that I had given Perkins two hundred guineas, instead of one—a secret I never durst tell before, not even to Johnson, not even to you.’ *Ib.* p. 409.

St. Margaret’s Hill is in Southwark. At the Court House there, on the six days beginning with July 10, many of the rioters were tried, and twenty-four capitally convicted. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 220, 277. Here thirty-four years earlier many of the Scotch Rebels had been tried, seventeen of whom were put to death with torture on Kennington Common. Smollett’s *Hist. of England*, iii. 188.

² Miss Burney describes Mr. Tyson as ‘a very civil Master of the Ceremonies.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, i. 376. Johnson himself was ‘little more than seventy.’

³ This passage very likely was meant to give Mr. Thrale a little confidence.

To

678.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

[Saturday], June 10, 1780.

You have ere now heard and read enough to convince you, that we have had something to suffer, and something to fear, and therefore I think it necessary to quiet the solicitude which you undoubtedly feel, by telling you that our calamities and terrors are now at an end. The soldiers are stationed so as to be every where within call²; there is no longer any body of rioters, and the individuals are hunted to their holes, and led to prison; the streets are safe and quiet; Lord George was last night sent to the Tower³. Mr. John Wilkes⁴ was this day with a party of soldiers in my neighbourhood, to seize the publisher of a seditious paper. Every body walks, and eats, and sleeps in security⁵. But the history of the last week would fill you with amazement, it is without any modern example.

Several chapels have been destroyed, and several inoffensive Papists have been plundered, but the high sport was to burn the

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 152.

² 'I bless every soldier I see,' wrote Dr. Burney to his daughter; 'we have no dependence on any defence from outrage but the military.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 407. Horace Walpole wrote on the same day as Johnson:—'While in the thick of the conflagration I was all indignation and a thousand passions. Last night, when sitting silently alone, horror rose as I cooled; and grief succeeded, and then all kinds of gloomy presages. For some time people have said, where will all this end? I as often replied, where will it begin? It is now begun, with a dreadful overture, and I tremble to think what the chorus may be! The sword reigns at present, and saved the capital! What is to depose the sword?' *Letters*, vii. 394.

³ 'The tower is much too dignified a prison for him—but he had left no other.' *Ib.* vii. 398. 'The guards that attended him were by far the greatest in number ever remembered to guard a state prisoner.' *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 263.

⁴ Wilkes had been lately elected City Chamberlain, and was no longer 'a Wilkite.' *Life*, iii. 430, *n.* 4. Ten years later he was seen going up to vote against Fox at Westminster 'amidst the hisses and groans of a multitude.' Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ed. 1826, ii. 120.

⁵ For *security* see *ante*, ii. 162, *n.* 3. On Thursday in this week—two days before the date of Johnson's Letter—even though the soldiers had poured in fast 'the shops were universally shut from Tyburn to Whitechapel.' *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 262.

jails.

jails. This was a good rabble trick. The debtors and the criminals were all set at liberty¹; but of the criminals, as has always happened, many are already retaken, and two pirates have surrendered themselves, and it is expected that they will be pardoned².

Government now acts again with its proper force; and we are all again under the protection of the King and the law. I thought that it would be agreeable to you and my master to have my testimony to the publick security; and that you would sleep more quietly when I told you that you are safe.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

679.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 12, 1780.

All is well, and all is likely to continue well. The streets

¹ 'June 9. We have now superabundantly to fear robbery; 300 desperate villains were released from Newgate. Lady Albemarle was robbed at Mrs. Keppel's door in Pall Mall at twelve at night. Baron D'Aguilar's coach was shot at here last night, close to the Crown [at Twickenham]. . . . June 12. One hears of nothing but robberies on the highway.' Walpole's Letters, vii. 392, 9. Miss Burney's sister wrote to her:—'There have been gangs of women going about to rob and plunder. Miss Kirwans went on Friday afternoon to walk in the Museum Gardens, and were stopped by a set of women, and robbed of all the money they had.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 408.

² The two pirates had been found guilty on March 31 at a Court of Admiralty, of causing a revolt in a privateer, and sentenced to death. They were to have been hanged on May 4, but they were respited 'in consequence of notice taken of the case

in the House of Commons. The captain, it seems, had been concerned in some illicit practices, and they had resisted going into port for fear of being pressed.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1780, pp. 199, 248. A correspondent states that 'the judge omitting to pass sentence of death, and only saying they should be carried "to the usual place of execution," a doubt arose, and this weighed in their favour as much as the alleviating circumstances. During the late riots they are said to have surrendered themselves to the judge, and offered to defend him when he fled from the fury of the populace.' *Ib.* p. 374. A man named Purse, who was under sentence of death for rape, and 'surrendered himself again into the custody of Mr. Akerman,' received a free pardon on July 15. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 212, 220. For Akerman, the Keeper of Newgate, see *Life*, iii. 431, 3.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 154.

are

are all quiet, and the houses are all safe¹. This is a true answer to the first enquiry which obtrudes itself upon your tongue at the reception of a letter from London. The publick has escaped a very heavy calamity. The rioters attempted the Bank on Wednesday night, but in no great number; and like other thieves, with no great resolution. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away². It is agreed, that if they had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panick, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found. Jack, who was always zealous for order and decency, declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive³. There is however now no longer any need of heroism or bloodshed; no blue riband is any longer worn⁴.

— called on Friday at Mrs. Gardiner's⁵, to see how she escaped or what she suffered; and told her, that she had herself too much affliction within doors, to take much notice of the disturbances without.

It was surely very happy that you and Mr. Thrale were away

¹ Wraxall records a curious fact which he witnessed when the riot was at its height. In Holborn, at a short distance from the blazing premises of a large distillery, 'a watchman,' he says, 'with his lanthorn in his hand passed us, calling the hour, as if in a time of profound tranquillity.' Wraxall's *Memoirs*, ed. 1815, i. 329.

² Crabbe, at eleven o'clock that night, met 'large bodies of horse and foot soldiers coming to guard the Bank.' Crabbe's *Works*, i. 84. Horace Walpole, writing three hours later, says:—'Colonel Jennings told me there had been an engagement at the Royal Exchange to defend the Bank, and that the Guards had shot sixty of the mob; I have since heard seventy.' *Letters*, vii. 387. The number is no doubt exaggerated. According to the *Annual Register*,

1780, i. 262, 'several fell, and many were wounded.'

³ 'Wilkes has very sensibly ridden home on Lord George Gordon, and distinguished himself by zeal and spirit.' Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 401. See *Life*, iii. 77, 430, *n.* 4.

⁴ The 'Protestants' wore blue ribbons in their hats. Horace Walpole wrote on Wednesday, June 7:—'It will probably be a black night; I am decking myself with blue ribbons like a May-day garland. Horsemen are riding by with muskets.' *Letters* vii. 386. Two days later he wrote that 'now the soldiers tear away blue cockades.' *Ib.* p. 390.

⁵ Johnson's friend, the wife of a tallow-chandler, on Snow Hill. *Life*, i. 242. She must have seen Newgate blazing hard by on one side, and the great distillery on the other.

in the tumult; you could have done nothing better than has been done, and must have felt much terrour which your absence has spared you.

We have accounts here of great violences committed by the Protestants at Bath; and of the demolition of the masshouse. We have seen so much here, that we are very credulous¹.

Pray tell Miss Burney that Mr. Hutton² called on me yesterday, and spoke of her with praise; not profuse, but very sincere, just as I do. And tell Queeney, that if she does not write oftener, I will try to forget her. There are other pretty girls that perhaps I could get, if I were not constant.

My Lives go on but slowly. I hope to add some to them this week. I wish they were well done.

Thus far I had written when I received your letter of battle and conflagration³. You certainly do right in retiring; for who can guess the caprice of the rabble? My master and Queeney are dear people for not being frightened⁴. I wrote to you a letter of intelligence and consolation; which, if you staid for it, you had on Saturday; and I wrote another on Saturday, which perhaps may follow you from Bath, with some atchievement of John Wilkes.

¹ For the demolition of the mass-house see *ante*, ii. 167, *n.* 2. Horace Walpole wrote on the 12th:—‘Last night, at Hampton Court, I heard of two Popish chapels demolished at Bath, and one at Bristol. My coachman has just been in Twickenham, and says half Bath is burnt; I trust this is but the natural progress of lies, that increase like a chairman’s legs by walking.’ *Letters*, vii. 395. For Johnson’s general habit of incredulity see *Life*, iii. 229.

² Hutton the Moravian. See *Life*, iv. 410, *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, pp. 364–9, and *The Early Diary of Fanny Burney*, i. 294, where a curious account is given of his introduction to the Burney family.

³ Mrs. Thrale gives this letter, or a substitute, for it. It belongs to those

‘well-written but studied epistles’ which Boswell evidently did not think authentic. *Ante*, ii. 147, *n.* 4. It is not easy to believe that writing as she says she was at 3 o’clock in the morning, after a night of ‘trembling agitation,’ she quoted Shakespeare, and drew a simile from ‘the iron bed of the tyrant Procrastes’ (*sic*). Part of the letter nevertheless may be genuine, though we should like to know how she got the original. She scarcely made a copy of it in her ‘trembling agitation.’

⁴ ‘Miss Burney is frightened, but she says better times will come. Mr. Thrale seems thunderstricken, he don’t mind anything; and Queeney’s curiosity is stronger than her fears.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 147.

Do not be disturbed; all danger here is apparently over: but a little agitation still continues. We frighten one another with seventy thousand Scots to come hither with the Dukes of Gordon and Argyle, and eat us, and hang us, or drown us; but we are all at quiet¹.

I am glad, though I hardly know why, that you are gone to Brighthelmstone rather than to Bristol. You are somewhat nearer home, and I may perhaps come to see you. Brighthelmstone will soon begin to be peopled, and Mr. Thrale loves the place; and you will see Mr. Scrase²; and though I am sorry that you should be so outrageously unroosted³, I think that Bath has had you long enough.

Of the commotions at Bath there has been talk here all day. An express must have been sent; for the report arrived many hours before the post, at least before the distribution of the letters. This report I mentioned in the first part of my letter, while I was yet uncertain of the fact.

When it is known that the rioters are quelled in London, their spirit will sink in every other place, and little more mischief will be done.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

680.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 14, 1780.

Every thing here is safe and quiet. This is the first thing to be told; and this I told in my last letter directed to Brighthelmstone. There has indeed been an universal panick, from

¹ Lord George Gordon was the son of the third Duke of Gordon. Two days later Horace Walpole, after mentioning that Lord George Gordon was in the Tower, continued:—'What a nation is Scotland; in every reign engendering traitors to the State, and false and pernicious to the Kings that favour it the most!

National prejudices, I know, are very vulgar; but if there are national characteristics, can one but dislike the soils and climates that concur to produce them?' *Letters*, vii. 400.

² *Ante*, i. 395.

³ This word Johnson gets from *The Winter's Tale*, Act ii. sc. 3.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 158.

which

which the King was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers, or the assistance of the civil magistrate, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities, such as a rabble's government must naturally produce¹.

Now you are at ease about the publick, I may tell you that I am not well; I have had a cold and cough some time, but it is grown so bad, that yesterday I fasted and was blooded, and to day took physick and dined: but neither fasting nor bleeding, nor dinner, nor physick, have yet made me well.

No sooner was the danger over, than the people of the Borough found out how foolish it was to be afraid, and formed themselves into four bodies for the defence of the place; through which they now march morning and evening in a martial manner².

I am glad to find that Mr. Thrale continues to grow better; if he is well, I hope we shall be all well: but I am weary of my cough, though I have had much worse.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

681.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 15, 1780.

Last night I told you that I was not well; and though you have much else to think on, perhaps you may be willing enough to hear, that by the help of an opiate, I think myself better to-day.

Whether I am or am not better, the town is quiet, and every body sleeps in quiet, except a few who please themselves with

¹ The King, it must be remembered, was solely answerable for the choice of a set of Ministers of whom Johnson said:—'Such a bunch of imbecility never disgraced a country.' *Life*, iv. 139.

² Several inhabitants of the City, who had proposed to arm themselves for their common preservation, received from the Adjutant-General on June 12 the following letter:—'The inhabitants of the Borough of South-

wark . . . have formed themselves into very useful, and at the same time unexceptionable associations; and if something of the same kind was adopted in the City there is no doubt but much use and great security would arise therefrom; but the using of fire-arms is improper, unnecessary, and cannot be approved.' *Ann. Reg.* 1780, i. 266.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 159.

guarding us now the danger is over. Perkins seems to have managed with great dexterity. Every body, I believe, now sees, that if the tumult had been opposed immediately, it had been immediately suppressed¹; and we are therefore now better provided against an insurrection, than if none had happened.

I hope you, and Master, and Queeney, and Burney, are all well. I was contented last night to send an excuse to Vesey, and two days ago another to Mrs. Horneck²; you may think I was bad, if you thought about it; and why should you not think about me who am so often thinking about you, and your appurtenances. But there is no gratitude in this world.

But I could tell you, Doris, if I would;
And since you treat me so, methinks I should.

So sings the sublime and pathetick Mr. Walsh³. Well! and I will tell you too. Among the heroes of the Borough, who twice a-day perambulate, or perequitate⁴ High-street and the Clink⁵, rides that renowned and redoubted knight, Sir Richard Hotham⁶. There is magnanimity, which defies every danger that is past, and publick spirit, that stands sentinel over property

¹ Horace Walpole wrote on the same day:—‘I can give you little account of the original of this shocking affair; Negligence was certainly its nurse, and Religion only its god-mother. . . . The lowest and most villanous of the people, and to no great amount, were almost the sole actors.’ *Letters*, vii. 402.

² *Ante*, i. 344.

³ ‘Yet I could tell you, fair-one, if I would,
And since you treat me thus,
methinks I should.’

Eclogue ii. Chalmers’s *English Poets*, ed. 1810, viii. 415.

Pope introduces Walsh in the *Prologue to the Satires*, l. 135:—

‘But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh would tell me
I could write.’

Johnson ends his brief Life of him by saying:—‘In all his writings there are pleasing passages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and seldom rises higher than to be pretty.’ *Works*, vii. 244.

⁴ Johnson does not give in his *Dictionary equitate, equitation, or perequitate*. Boswell, seven years earlier, had written:—‘This day we were to begin our *equitation*, as I said; for *I* would needs make a word too.’ *Life*, v. 131.

⁵ ‘Clink Street begins at Dead-man’s Place and extends to St. Mary Overy’s Dock. Clink Prison in Clink Street belongs to the Liberty of the Bishop of Winchester, called the Clink Liberty, but is little used. It is a very dismal hole, where debtors are sometimes confined.’ Dodsley’s *London*, ii. 147.

⁶ *Ante*, ii. 154, n. 2.

that he does not own. Tell me no more of the self-devoted Decii, or of the leap of Curtius. Let fame talk henceforward with all her tongues of Hotham the Hatmaker.

I was last week at Renny's conversation¹, and Renny got her room pretty well filled; and there were Mrs. Ord, and Mrs. Horneck, and Mrs. Bunbury², and other illustrious names, and much would poor Renny have given to have had Mrs. Thrale too, and Queeney, and Burney: but human happiness is never perfect; there is always *une vuide affreuse*, as Maintenon complained³, there is some craving void left aking in the breast. Renny is going to Ramsgate; and thus the world drops away, and I am left in the sultry town, to see the sun in the crab, and perhaps in the lion⁴, while you are paddling with the Nereids.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

682.

TO MISS REYNOLDS⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

Bolt Court, June 16, 1780.

I answer your letter as soon as I can, for I have just received it. I am very willing to wait on you at all times, and will sit for the picture, and, if it be necessary, will sit again, for whenever I sit I shall be always with you⁶.

¹ Renny was Miss Reynolds. For *conversation* see *ante*, ii. 105, n. 4.

² H. W. Bunbury, the caricaturist, had married one of Mrs. Horneck's daughters. Forster's *Goldsmith*, ii. 283. See *ante*, i. 344, n. 2. See Appendix A.

³ Madame de Maintenon wrote to Madame de la Maisonfort:—'J'ai été jeune et jolie; j'ai goûté des plaisirs; j'ai été aimée partout. Dans un âge plus avancé, j'ai passé des années dans le commerce de l'esprit; je suis venue à la faveur, et je vous proteste, ma chère fille, que tous les états laissent un vide affreux.' VOLTAIRE, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ch. 27. Baretti, noticing Johnson's error

in gender says:—'I have some notion that he wrote it right, and the ignorant woman made it wrong, thinking she was doing right.'

⁴ The sun enters the Crab on June 21, and the Lion on July 22 or 23.

⁵ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 649.

⁶ For Johnson's sitting to Miss Reynolds for his portrait see *post*, Letter of August 20, 1783. Though he often sat to her he once said that 'he thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Public practice of any art (he observed) and staring in men's faces is very indelicate in a female."' *Life*, ii. 362.

Do not, my love, burn your papers. I have mended little but some bad rhymes¹. I thought them very pretty, and was much moved in reading them. The red ink is only lake and gum, and with a moist sponge will be washed off.

I have been out of order, but, by bleeding and other means, am now better. Let me know on which day I shall come to you.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

683.

TO JOHN NICHOLS².

Sir,

I have been out of order, but by bleeding and physick think I am better, and can go again to work.

Your note on Broome will do me much good. Can you give me a few dates for A. Philips? I wrote to Cambridge about them, but have had no answer³.

I am,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

June 16, 1780.

To Mr. Nicol.

SAM: JOHNSON.

684.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Wednesday, June 21, 1780.

Now you come to a settled place⁵ I have some inclination to write to you; for in writing after you there was no pleasure. All is quiet; and that quietness is now more likely to continue than if it had never been disturbed. —'s case, if

¹ 'Of a poem now before me. Johnson read it attentively, and made numerous corrections; but after all it is not worth much.' CROKER.

² First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 10.

³ Johnson on May 25 had written to Dr. Farmer for 'the dates or other informations which College or Uni-

versity registers can supply relating to Ambrose Philips, Broome and Gray. *Life*, iii. 427. His correspondent's neglect to answer is apparent in the Lives of these men. The information which was not supplied by him was not obtained elsewhere.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 162.

⁵ Brighton.

it be not affected, is ridiculous; but there is in the world much tenderness where there is no misfortune, and much courage where there is no danger.

My cold is grown better, but is not quite well, nor bad enough now to be complained of. I wish I had been with you to see the Isle of Wight; but I shall perhaps go some time without you, and then we shall be even.

What you told me of Mr. Middleton frightened me; but I am still of my old opinion, that a semivegetable diet will keep all well. I have dined on Monday and to-day only on peas¹.

I suppose the town grows empty, for I have no invitations; and I begin to wish for something, I hardly know what: but I should like to move when every body is moving; and yet I purpose to stay till the work is done, which I take little care to do. *Sic labitur ætas*².

The world is full of troubles. Mrs. — has just been with me to get a surgeon³ to her daughter; the girl that Mrs. Cumins⁴ rejected, who has received a kick from a horse, that has broken five fore-teeth on the upper side. The world is likewise full of escapes; had the blow been a little harder it had killed her.

It was a twelvemonth last Sunday since the convulsions in my breast left me⁵. I hope I was thankful when I recollected it: by removing that disorder, a great improvement was made in the enjoyment of life. I am now as well as men at my age can expect to be, and I yet think I shall be better.

I have had with me a brother of —, a Spanish merchant, whom the war has driven from his residence at Valencia; he is gone to see his friends, and will find Scotland but a sorry place after twelve years' residence in a happier climate. He is a very agreeable man, and speaks no Scotch⁶.

¹ *Post*, p. 184, we find the word spelt *pease*, in accordance with the rule given in Johnson's *Dictionary* under *Pease*. See *ante*, ii. 143, for his alternate diet.

² 'Cito pede labitur ætas.' OVID, *Ars. Am.* iii. 65.

³ *Ante*, ii. 1, n. 4.

⁴ In the Letter of October 31, 1781, there is mention of Cummins and of Mrs. Cumyns. Perhaps in these three ways of spelling one name only is included.

⁵ See *ante*, ii. 143, n. 3.

⁶ Boswell's brother David was this 'very agreeable man.' Boswell quotes

Keep Master to his diet, and tell him that his illwillers¹ are very unwilling to think that he can ever sit more in parliament, but by caution and resolution he may see many parliaments. Pay my respects to Queeney and Burney. Living so apart we shall get no credit by our studies²; but I hope to see you all again some time. Do not let separation make us forget one another.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

685.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 4, 1780.

You are too happy for any body but yourself to travel in such pretty company, and leave every thing safe behind you, and find every thing well when you arrive; and yet I question if you are quite contented, though every body envies you⁴. Keep my master tight in his geers⁵, for if he breaks loose the mischief will be very extensive.

Your account of Mr. S—— and of Miss O—— is very melancholy; I wish them both their proper relief from their several

this passage and says in a note:— ‘Mrs. Piozzi has omitted the name, she best knows why.’ *Life*, iii. 434. Writing of him to Temple he says:— ‘In Spain he gave up all philosophizing, and applied himself to real business. He says he found out that men who speculate on life, as you and I do, are not successful in substantial concerns.’ *Letters of Boswell*, p. 254. Johnson had spoken very differently of the effect of climate eight years earlier, when Boswell talked to him about this same brother:— ‘I mentioned a friend of mine who had resided long in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON. “Sir, he is attached to some woman.” BOSWELL. “I rather believe, Sir, it is the fine climate which keeps him there.” JOHNSON. “Nay, Sir, how can you talk so? What is

climate to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia, should I not be exiled? What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life? You may advise me to go to live at Bologna to eat sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried.”’ *Life*, ii. 195.

¹ *Illwiller* is not in Johnson’s *Dictionary*.

² See *ante*, ii. 98, for the lessons in Latin which he gave to Queeney and Miss Burney.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 164.

⁴ Mrs. Thrale had been to Streat-ham and returned to Brighton. Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, i. 409.

⁵ *Gears* in Johnson’s *Dictionary*— ‘the traces by which horses or oxen draw.’

maladies,

maladies¹. But I am glad that Queeney continues well; and hope she will not be too rigorous with the young ones, but allow them to be happy their own way; for what better way will they ever find²?

C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme;
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.

I have not seen or done much since I had the misfortune of seeing you go away. I was one night at Burney's. There were [*sic*] Pepys, and there were Mrs. Ord, and Paradise, and Hoole, and Dr. Dunbar of Aberdeen, and I know not how many more. And Pepys and I had all the talk³.

To-day called on me the Dean of Hereford⁴, who says that the barley-harvest is likely to be very abundant. There is something for our consolation. Don't forget that I am,

Dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney on June 29:—'This morning I carried a bunch of grapes to Mr. Scrase, who was too ill to swallow one, or to see even me. My master however is quite in rosy health, and jokes Peggy Owen for her want of power to flash.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 409.

² 'Mr. Johnson,' writes Mrs. Piozzi (*Anecdotes*, p. 21), 'was exceedingly disposed to the general indulgence of children, and was even scrupulously and ceremoniously attentive not to offend them. He had strongly persuaded himself of the difficulty people always find to erase early impressions either of kindness or resentment.' See *Life*, iv. 196. This perhaps he had got from South, who, addressing 'the educators of youth,' says:—'Let them remember that excellent and never to be forgotten advice, *that boys will be men*; and that the memory of all base usage will sink so deep into, and grow up so in-

separably with them, that it will not be so much as in their own power ever to forget it.' South's *Sermons*, ed. 1823, iii. 398.

³ Miss Burney wrote to Mrs. Thrale on July 8:—'I have not seen Dr. Johnson since the day you left me, when he came hither, and met Mrs. Ord, Mr. Hoole, Mrs. Reynolds, Baretti, the Paradises, Pepys, Castles, Dr. Dunbar and some others; and then he was in high spirits and good humour, talked all the talk, affronted nobody, and delighted everybody. I never saw him more sweet, or better attended to by his audience.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 412. Johnson had met Dr. Dunbar at Aberdeen. *Life*, iii. 436; v. 92. He was the uncle of Sir James Dunbar of Boath, Capt. R.N., whose widow died in 1888, aged 93.

⁴ Dr. Nathan Wetherell, who was also Master of University College, Oxford. Le Neve's *Fast. Eccl. Angl.* iii. 538.

TO

686.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 10, 1780.

If Mr. Thrale eats but half his usual quantity, he can hardly eat too much. It were better however to have some rule, and some security. Last week I saw flesh but twice, and I think fish once, the rest was pease.

You are afraid, you say, lest I extenuate myself too fast, and are an enemy to violence: but did you never hear nor read, dear Madam, that every man has his *genius*, and that the great rule by which all excellence is attained, and all success procured, is, to follow *genius*; and have you not observed in all our conversations that my *genius* is always in extremes; that I am very noisy, or very silent; very gloomy, or very merry; very sour, or very kind? And would you have me cross my *genius*, when it leads me sometimes to voracity and sometimes to abstinence²? You know that the oracle said follow your *genius*. When we get together again, (but when alas will that be?) you can manage me, and spare me the solicitude of managing myself.

Poor Miss O——³ called on me on Saturday, with that fond and tender application which is natural to misery, when it looks to every body for that help which nobody can give. I was melted; and soothed and counselled her as well as I could, and am to visit her to-morrow.

She gave a very honourable account of my dear Queeney; and says of my master, that she thinks his manner and temper more altered than his looks, but of this alteration she could give no particular account; and all that she could say ended in this, that he is now sleepy in the morning. I do not wonder at the scantiness of her narration, she is too busy within to turn her eyes abroad.

I am glad that Pepys⁴ is come, but hope that resolute

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 166.

² 'Johnson, though he could be rigidly abstemious, was not a temperate man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately.' *Life*, i. 468.

For Johnson's extreme of silence see *ib.* iii. 307.

³ Miss Owen. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 410.

⁴ Sir Lucas Pepys, the physician. *Ante*, ii. 106, n. 3.

temperance

temperance will make him unnecessary. I doubt he can do no good to poor Mr. Scrase.

I stay at home to work, and yet do not work diligently; nor can tell when I shall have done, nor perhaps does any body but myself wish me to have done; for what can they hope I shall do better? yet I wish the work was over, and I was at liberty¹. And what would I do if I was at liberty? Would I go to Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Porter, and see the old places, and sigh to find that my old friends are gone? Would I recal plans of life which I never brought into practice, and hopes of excellence which I once presumed², and never have attained? Would I compare what I now am with what I once expected to have been? Is it reasonable to wish for suggestions of shame, and opportunities of sorrow?

If you please, Madam, we will have an end of this, and contrive some other wishes. I wish I had you in an evening, and I wish I had you in a morning; and I wish I could have a little talk, and see a little frolick. For all this I must stay, but life will not stay.

I will end my letter and go to Blackmore's Life³, when I have told you that

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

687.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

London, July 27, 1780.

And thus it is, Madam, that you serve me. After having

¹ 'This paragraph paints him to the very life.' BARETTI.

² Johnson does not give in his *Dictionary* any instance of this construction. Perhaps however he means 'which I once presumed to attain.'

³ Blackmore was one of the four poets who, by his recommendation, were added to the collection. Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were the others. *Life*, iii. 370; iv. 54. Mrs. Thrale wrote to him on May 9 of this year:— 'Shall we have some chat about the

Lives now? that of Blackmore will be very entertaining I dare say, and he will be rescued from the old wits who worried him, much to your disliking; so a little for love of his Christianity, a little for love of his physick, a little for love of his courage—and a little for love of contradiction, you will save him from his malevolent criticks, and perhaps do him the honour to devour him yourself.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 122.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 169.

kept

kept me a whole week hoping and hoping, and wondering and wondering what could have stopped your hand from writing, comes a letter to tell me, that I suffer by my own fault. As if I might not correspond with my Queeney, and we might not tell one another our minds about politicks or morals, or any thing else. Queeney and I are both steady, and may be trusted; we are none of the giddy gabblers, we think before we speak.

I am afraid that I shall hardly find my way this summer into the country, though the number of my *Lives* now grows less. I will send you two little volumes in a few days¹.

As the workmen are still at Streatham, there is no likelihood of seeing you and my master in any short time; but let my master be where he will so he be well. I am not, I believe, any fatter than when you saw me, and hope to keep corpulence away; for I am so lightsome and so airy, and can so walk, you would talk of it if you were to see me. I do not always sleep well; but I have no pain nor sickness in the night. Perhaps I only sleep ill because I am too long a-bed².

I dined yesterday at Sir Joshua's with Mrs. Cholmondeley, and she told me, I was the best critick in the world; and I told her, that nobody in the world could judge like her of the merit of a critick³.

On Sunday I was with Dr. Lawrence and his two sisters-in-law, to dine with Mr. G——⁴ at Putney. The Doctor cannot hear in a coach better than in a room, and it was but a dull

¹ Miss Burney wrote to Mrs. Thrale on August 16:—'Dr. Johnson has delighted me with another volume of his *Lives*—that which contains Blackmore, Congreve, &c., which he tells me you have had.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 420. These volumes were not yet published.

² 'That was true enough.' BARETTI.

³ Mrs. Cholmondeley was a younger sister of Peg Woffington. She married the Hon. Robert Cholmondeley, second son of the third Earl of Cholmondeley and grandson of Sir Robert Walpole. 'I have been un-

fortunate in my own family,' wrote Horace Walpole on December 5, 1746; 'my nephew, Captain Cholmondeley, has married a player's sister.' *Letters*, ii. 68. The Captain afterwards quitted the army and took orders. *Ib.* ii. 4. Boswell dined with her at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, when 'she was in a high flow of spirits, and exhibited some lively sallies of hyperbolical compliment to Johnson, with whom she had been long acquainted, and was very easy.' *Life*, iii. 318.

⁴ 'Gawler.' BARETTI.

day; only I saw two crownbirds, paltry creatures¹, and a red curlew.

Every body is gone out of town, only I am left behind, and know not when I shall see either Naiad or Dryad; however, it is as it has commonly been, I have no complaint to make but of myself. I have been idle, and *of idleness can come no goodness*.

Mrs. Williams was frightened from London as you were frightened from Bath. She is come back, as she thinks, better. Mrs. Desmoulins has a disorder resembling an asthma; which I am for curing with calomel and jalap, but Mr. Levet treats it with antimonial wine. Mr. Levet keeps on his legs stout, and walks, I suppose, ten miles a-day².

I stick pretty well to diet, and desire my master may be told of it; for no man said oftener than he, that *the less we eat the better*.

Poor —, after having thrown away Lord —'s patronage and three hundred a-year, has had another disappointment. He procured a recommendation from Lord — to the Governor of Jamaica; but to make this useful, something was to be done by the Bishop of London, which has been refused. Thus is the world filled with hope and fear, and struggle, and disappointment.

Pray do you never add to the other vexations, any diminution of your kindness for,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

688.

TO LORD WESTCOTE³.

MY LORD,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, July 27, 1780.

The course of my undertaking will now require a short life

¹ 'Very rare and singular birds; but Johnson cared for little but books, and more books.' BARETTI. There is a print of a crown-bird in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1750, p. 264, where it is described as 'a very stately fine fowl, of the bigness of a large turkey. Upon the top of its head grow certain shafts or stalks, bearing little round balls on their

tops, like those of an Earl's coronet, of a yellowish colour.'

² 'His frame was firm, his powers were bright,

Though now his eightieth year was nigh.'

Life, iv. 138.

³ Published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 650. For Lord Westcote, see *ante*, i. 177, n. 4.

of your brother, Lord Lyttelton. My desire is to avoid offence, and to be totally out of danger¹. I take the liberty of proposing to your lordship, that the historical account should be written under your direction by any friend you may be willing to employ, and I will only take upon myself to examine the poetry. Four pages like those of his work², or even half so much, will be sufficient. As the press is going on, it will be fit that I should know what you shall be pleased to determine.

I am,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

689.

TO LORD WESTCOTE³.

MY LORD,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, July 28, 1780.

I wish it had been convenient to have had that done which I proposed. I shall certainly not wantonly nor willingly offend⁴; but when there are such near relations living, I had rather they would please themselves. For the life of Lord Lyttelton I shall need no help—it was very public, and I have no need to be minute. But I return your lordship thanks for your readiness to help me. I have another life in hand, that of Mr. West⁵, about which I am quite at a loss; any information respecting him would be of great use to,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ For the offence which he gave, see *Life*, iv. 57.

² By 'his work' Johnson means, I suppose, his *History of Henry II*, which was published in quarto.

³ Published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 650.

⁴ He forgot this promise when in the *Life* he described 'poor Lyttelton with humble gratitude returning

acknowledgments' to the Critical Reviewers.

⁵ Gilbert West. His mother and the mother of Lyttelton and Westcote were sisters—daughters of Sir Richard Temple of Stowe. Burke's *Peerage*. Johnson, in writing his *Life*, says:—'The intelligence which my inquiries have gained is general and scanty.'

690.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, August 1, 1780.

I had your letter about Mr. S—— and Miss O——²; but there was nothing to which I had any answer, or to which any answer could be made.

This afternoon Dr. Lawrence drank tea, and, as he always does, asked about Mr. Thrale; I told him how well he was when I heard; and he does not eat too much, said the Doctor; I said, not often; and the return was, that he who in that case should once eat too much, might eat no more. I keep my rule very well³, and, I think, continue to grow better.

Tell my pretty dear Queeney, that when we meet again, we will have, at least for some time, two lessons in a day. I love her, and think on her when I am alone; hope we shall be very happy together, and mind our books.

Now August and Autumn are begun, and the Virgin takes possession of the sky. Will the Virgin do any thing for a man of seventy? I have a great mind to end my work under the Virgin⁴.

I have sent two volumes to Mr. Perkins to be sent to you, and beg you to send them back as soon as you have all done with them. I let the first volume get to the Reynolds's, and could never get it again⁵.

I sent to Lord Westcote about his brother's life, but he says he knows not whom to employ; and is sure I shall do him no injury. There is an ingenious scheme to save a day's work, or part of a day, utterly defeated⁶. Then what avails it to be wise? The plain and the artful man must both do their own work.— But I think I have got a life of Dr. Young⁷.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 172.

² Mr. Scrase and Miss Owen.

³ *Ante*, ii. 143.

⁴ The sun enters Virgo on August 23, and leaves it on September 22 or 23.

⁵ Sir Joshua lost one of the epigraphs which Johnson wrote for Goldsmith. *Ante*, i. 407.

⁶ 'When Johnson was publishing

his *Life of Gray*,' says Mr. Cole, 'I gave him several anecdotes, but he was very anxious as soon as possible to get to the end of his labours.' Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, 2nd series, 1888, p. 71.

⁷ From Herbert Croft. It was of this *Life* that Burke said:—'No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson;

Susy

Susy and Sophy have had a fine Summer; it is a comfort to think that somebody is happy. And they make verses, and act plays¹.

Mrs. Montague is, I think, in town, and has sent Mrs. Williams her annuity²; but I hear nothing from her, but I may be contented if I hear from you, for

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

691.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

August 8, 1780.

What do you scold so for about Granville's life; do you not see that the appendage neither gains nor saves any thing to me?⁴ I shall have Young's life given me, to spite you.

Methinks it was pity to send the girls to school; they have indeed had a fine vacation, dear loves, but if it had been longer it had been still finer.

Did Master read my books? You say nothing of him in this letter; but I hope he is well, and growing every day nearer to perfect health. When do you think of coming home?

I have not yet persuaded myself to work, and therefore know not when my work will be done. Yet I have a mind to see Lichfield. Dr. Taylor seems to be well. He has written to me without a syllable of his lawsuit⁵.

You have heard in the papers how * * * is come to age; I have enclosed a short song of congratulation, which you must

it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength; it has all the contortions of the Sybil without the inspiration.' *Life*, iv. 59.

¹ Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney on June 29:—'Susan and Sophy have taken to writing verses—'tis the fashion of the school they say, and Sophy's are the best performances of all the misses, except one monkey of eighteen years old.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 409.

² *Ante*, i. 371, n. 1.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 174.

⁴ 'Somebody offered to write an appendage to the *Life of Granville* after his doing it; but that did not square with his idleness, as he wished to save himself the trouble of writing that life.' BARETTI. This explanation seems improbable. Mrs. Thrale must, I think, have seen the *Life* before the additions mentioned *ante*, ii. 131.

⁵ *Ante*, ii. 158.

not

not show to anybody¹. It is odd that it should come into any body's head. I hope you will read it with candour; it is, I believe, one of the author's first essays in that way of writing, and a beginner is always to be treated with tenderness.

My two gentlewomen are both complaining. Mrs. Desmoulins had a mind of Dr. Turton²; I sent for him, and he has prescribed for Mrs. Williams, but I do not find that he promises himself much credit from either of them.

I hope it will not be long before I shall have another little volume for you, and still there will be work undone. If it were not for these Lives, I think I could not forbear coming to look at you, now you have room for me. But I still think to stay till I have cleared my hands.

Queeney is not good. She seldom writes to me, and yet I love her, and I love you all, for

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

692.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

August 14, 1780.

I hope my dear Queeney's suspicions are groundless. Whenever any alteration of manner happens, I believe a small cathartick will set all right⁴.

I hope you have no design of stealing away to Italy before

¹ The song was on Sir John Lade, Mr. Thrale's nephew. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1759, p. 392, among the Births is recorded on August 1:—'Relict of Sir John Lade, Bt., of a son and heir, who is immediately entitled to a very large estate.' Johnson, a fortnight before he died, repeated the song 'with great spirit, saying he had never repeated it but once since he composed it, and had given but one copy of it.' It is printed in the *Life*, iv. 413.

² For the phrase 'to have a mind of a person or thing,' see *ante*, i. 314, 343. Turton attended Goldsmith on his death-bed. 'When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, "Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have: is your mind at ease?" Goldsmith answered it was not.' *Life*, iii. 164.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 176.

⁴ The suspicions, no doubt, were about a change for the worse in Mr. Thrale's health.

the

the election, nor of leaving me behind you¹; though I am not only Seventy, but Seventy-one². Could not you let me lose a year in round numbers? Sweetly, sweetly, sings Dr. Swift,

Some dire misfortune to portend,
No enemy can match a friend³.

But what if I am Seventy-two; I remember Sulpitius says of Saint Martin (now that's above your reading), *Est animus victor annorum, et senectuti cedere nescius*⁴. Match me that among your young folks. If you try to plague me, I shall tell you that, according to Galen, life begins to decline from *Thirty-five*⁵.

¹ 'A man who has not been in Italy,' said Johnson, 'is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see.' *Life*, iii. 36. They had been on the point of going there in 1776, but had abandoned their intention on the sudden death of Mr. Thrale's son. *Ante*, i. 389. Miss Burney records on March 23, 1781, that 'Mr. Thrale had resolved upon going abroad; first to Spa, next to Italy, and then whither his fancy led him! that Dr. Johnson was to accompany them.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 11. Thrale's death, which followed within a fortnight, for a second time barred Johnson's hopes of seeing Italy. In the last year of his life, for the third time, a prospect opened before him of visiting that country, but it came to nothing. *Life*, iv. 336.

² He was not yet seventy-one.

³ 'Some great misfortune to portend,

No enemy can match a friend.'

SWIFT'S *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 243.

⁴ Saint Martin was Bishop of Tours in the fourth century. 'The saint,' writes Gibbon, 'once mistook (as Don Quixote might have done) an harmless funeral for an idolatrous procession, and imprudently

committed a miracle.' *Decline and Fall*, ed. 1807, v. 88. Johnson's quotation is from the Third Epistle of Sulpicius Severus. The dying Saint is represented as saying:—'Sub signis tuis, quoadusque ipse jusseris, militabo; et quamvis optata sit seni missio post laborem, est tamen animus victor annorum, et cedere nescius senectuti.' *Bibliotheca Patrum Latina Patrologiæ*, xx. 182.

⁵ 'As I went into his room the morning of my birthday once, and said to him, "Nobody sends me any verses now because I am thirty-five years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six," he burst out suddenly:—

"Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five.
Could philosophers contrive
Life to stop at thirty-five,
Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five.
For howe'er we boast and strive
Life declines from thirty-five.
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five;

But

But as we go off, others come on: Queeney's last letter was very pretty. What a hussey she is to write so seldom. She has no events, then let her write sentiment as you and I do; and sentiment you know is inexhaustible.

If you want events, here is Mr. Levet just come in at four-score from a walk to Hampstead, eight miles, in August. This, however, is all that I have to tell you, except that I have three bunches of grapes on a vine in my garden¹; at least, this is all that I will now tell of my garden.

Both my females are ill, both very ill; Mrs. Desmoulins thought that she wished for Dr. Turton²; and I sent for him, and then took him to Mrs. Williams, and he prescribes for both, though without much hope of benefiting either. Yet physick has its powers: you see that I am better; and Mr. Shaw³ will maintain, that he and I saved my master. But if he is to live always away from us, what did we get by saving him? If we cannot live together, let us hear; when I have no letter from Brighthelmston, think how I fret, and write oftener; you write to this body and to that, and nobody loves you like

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

693.

MADAM,

TO MRS. [MISS] PROWSE⁴.

For the loss which you have suffered I will not recall your grief by the formality of condolence. I believe all to whom

And all who wisely wish to wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.

And now," said he, "as I was writing them down, you may see what it is to come for poetry to a Dictionary-maker; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly." Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 164. Stella was not quite forty-six when she died. Swift wrote verses on her last birthday, March 13, 1726-7. Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 21.

¹ 'Behind Johnson's house in Bolt

Court was a garden which he took delight in watering.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 531. 'He sometimes employed himself in watering and pruning a vine.' *Life*, iii. 398. 'Lord Eldon often speaks of the fine fruit of Gower Street, when he lived in the house now No. 42.' *Nollekens and his Times*, i. 33.

² *Ante*, ii. 191, n. 2.

³ A Mr. Shaw is mentioned *ante*, i. 397.

⁴ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. v. 441. Copied by

Mrs.

Mrs. Prowse was known, consider the world as deprived by her departure of a very bright and eminent example.

The allowance which she was pleased to make towards the maintenance of the unhappy girl, has been long discontinued, how long, I really do not know, and am afraid of favouring myself by a conjectural account.

Not knowing whether the payment was withheld by negligence or intention, I sometimes purposed to have written to the Lady, but never did it. Perhaps your accounts can set you right.

It may be, Madam, in your power, to gratify my curiosity. Your servants, I suppose, go frequently to Froome¹, and it will be thought by me a favour if you will be pleased to bid them collect any little tradition that may yet remain, of one Johnson, who more than forty years ago was for a short time a Bookbinder or Stationer in that town². Such intelligence must be gotten by accident, and therefore cannot be immediately expected, but perhaps in time somebody may be found that knew him.

me from the original in the possession of the Rev. Edward B. Edgell of Bromham Rectory, Chippenham. Miss Prowse, Johnson's correspondent, married the Rev. J. M. Rogers, Mr. Edgell's great-uncle.

The 'unhappy girl' about whom Johnson writes was a lunatic—his first cousin according to Hawkins (Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 603); who adds that 'upon her discharge from Bethlem Hospital as incurable, he had placed her in a mad-house at Bethnal Green.' Johnson in his letter of February 17, 1784, calls her Phoebe Herne, and in his will, Elizabeth Herne. *Life*, iv. 403. He does not mention any relationship. The bills for her keeping, says Hawkins, amounted to £25 a year, towards which 'Mrs. Prowse had bequeathed her an annuity of £10.' It is clear from the above letter that

during her life-time Mrs. Prowse had made her an allowance, though she had discontinued it for some years. On the third sheet, which is blank, is written:—'Not finding in my Mother's Books any acct. of the money, having been paid for six years I sent him the whole.' See also *post*, Letters of May 7, 1781, and June 4, 1782.

¹ Johnson's frequent indifference to the spelling of proper names is shown in this letter, for, while here he writes *Froome*, in the direction he spells it *Frome*.

² See *post*, Letter of December 9, 1780, for a further account of this man, and Letter of November 29, 1784, for Johnson's inquiries after his relations. See also his will for his legacies to such as he could discover. *Life*, iv. 403.

The great civility of your letter has encouraged me to this request.

The money¹ which your excellent Mother's liberality makes payable to me may be remitted by a note on a Banker, or on the Bank to,

Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, London.

SAM: JOHNSON.

August 14, 1780.

694.

TO JOHN NICHOLS².

There is a copy of verses by Fenton on the *first fit of the gout*, in Pope's miscellanies, and I think, in the last volumes of Dryden. In Pope's I am sure.

To Mr. Nicol.

695.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

I should have given Fenton's birth to Shelton in Staffordshire, but that I am afraid there is no such place³. The rest I have,

¹ The annuity for the mad girl.

² This and the next four Letters were first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 10, where Nichols says in a note that 'The verses *On the Gout* are printed from Fenton's *Collection* in the *Select Collection*, 1780, vol. iii. p. 177.' By 'Dryden' Johnson no doubt means *Miscellany Poems, By the most eminent Hands*. Published by Mr. Dryden. The first edition was brought out when Fenton was an infant, but after Dryden's death many pieces were added and several omitted. Lowndes's *Bibl. Man.*, p. 678. Fenton's verses are inserted in the *English Poets*, ed. 1790, xxxv. 378, with the following note:—'The compilers having omitted some pretty verses I have put them in here. DR.

JOHNSON.' The most humorous couplet is the following:—

'Thou that dost oft from pampered prelate's toe

Emphatically urge the pains below.'
Fenton died of the gout—'of indolence and inactivity,' as Pope wrote to Gay. (Elwin and Court-hope's *Pope*, vii. 436.) 'A woman that once waited on him in a lodging told him, as she said, that he would "lie a-bed, and be fed with a spoon."' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 58. Nevertheless Pope in his Epitaph on him says, he

'From Nature's temp'rate feast rose satisfy'd.' *Ib.* p. 358

³ 'Shelton, a township and chapelry in the parish and newly-erected borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, County of Stafford, two miles E. N.E. from

except his Secretaryship, of which I know not what to make. When Lord Orrery was in office, Lewis was his Secretary. Lewis lived in my time; I knew him¹. The Gout verses were always given to Fenton, when I was young, and he was living. Lord Orrery told me that Fenton was his tutor; but never thought he was his Father's Secretary². Pray let me see the Oxford and Cambridge [Verses] &c. [1707]. If you are sure it was published by Fenton I should take notice of it³.

696.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[? Summer of 1780.]

Mr. Johnson desires Mr. Nicols to send him

Ruffhead's life of Pope⁴.

Pope's Works.

Swift's Works with Dr. Hawkesworth's life⁵.

Lyttelton's Works,

and with these he hopes to have done.

The first to be got is Lyttelton.

Newcastle-under-Lyme, containing with the hamlet of Etruria and part of Cobridge, 9267 inhabitants.' Lewis's *Top. Dict. of England*, ed. 1835. Fenton, in his Latin epitaph on his father, describes him as 'Johannes Fenton de Shelton.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 54.

¹ Perhaps he was 'Mr. F. Lewis' who translated some of the mottoes to the *Rambler*, 'whom Johnson thus described to Mr. Malone:—"Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society."' *Life*, i. 226.

² 'Fenton was awhile secretary to Charles, Earl of Orrery, in Flanders, and tutor to his young son, who afterwards mentioned him with great esteem and tenderness.' Johnson's *Works*, viii. 55.

³ 'He published in 1707 a collection of poems.' *Ib.* p. 56. It was in 1717 that this collection was published under the title of *Poems on Several Occasions*.

⁴ 'Dr. Johnson censured Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*, and said, "he knew nothing of Pope, and nothing of poetry."' *Life*, ii. 166.

⁵ Johnson begins his *Life of Swift* by saying:—"An account of Dr. Swift has been already collected with great diligence and acuteness by Dr. Hawkesworth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship.' On September 18 of this year Johnson recorded in his Diary:—"I have Swift and Pope yet to write; Swift is just begun.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 185.

TO

697.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

[Summer of 1780.]

Mr. Johnson being now at home desires the last leaves of the Criticism on Pope's Epitaphs, and he will correct them¹.

Mr. Nichol is entreated to save the proof Sheets of Pope because they are promised to a Lady who desires to have them².

698.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

SIR,

[August 16, 1780³.]

I expected to have found a life of Lord Lyttelton prefixed to his Works. Is there not one before the quarto Edition? I think there is—if not, I am with respect to him, quite aground.

Wednesday.

699.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

August 18, 1780.

I lost no time, and have enclosed our conversation. You write of late very seldom. I wish you would write upon *subjects*⁵; any thing to keep alive. You have your beaux,

¹ This criticism Johnson had first published in 1756 in *The Universal Visitor*. *Life*, i. 306. He added it to his *Life of Pope*.

² It was to Miss Burney that he gave them. In her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 178, she says that Dr. Burney wished to have a proof sheet, 'but left to his daughter the risk of the petition. A hint however proved sufficient. He offered an entire Life, adding with a benignant smile, "Choose your poet." Without hesitation the choice was Pope. He composed with so ready an accuracy that he sent his copy to the press unread, reserving all his corrections for the proof sheets; and conse-

quently they were at times liberally marked with changes.' Boswell had been promised the proof sheets. *Life*, iii. 371. He was presented with the greatest part of the manuscript. *Ib.* iv. 36.

³ The date is in Nichols's handwriting.

There is no Life prefixed to the quarto edition of Lyttelton's *Works*.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 179.

⁵ In his last letter to her he had said :—'Queency has no events, then let her write sentiment as you and I do; and sentiment, you know, is inexhaustible.' Apparently it had proved exhaustible on her side.

and

and your flatterers, and here am poor I forced to flatter myself ; and any good of myself I am not very easy to believe, so that I really live but a sorry life. What shall I do with Lyttelton's life ? I can make a short life, and a short criticism, and conclude. Why did not you like Collins, and Gay, and Blackmore ¹, as well as Akenside ?

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

700.

TO THE REVEREND DR. BEATTIE.

Bolt Court, August 21, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 434.

701.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, August 21, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 435.

702.

TO MRS. THRALE ².

DEAR MADAM,

London, August 24, 1780.

I do not wonder that you can think and write but of one thing. Yet concerning that thing you may be less uneasy, as you are now in the right way. You are at least doing, what I was always desirous to have you do, and which, when despair put an end to the caution of men going in the dark, produced at last all the good that has been obtained. Gentle purges, and slight phlebotomies, are not my favourites ; they are pop-gun batteries ³, which lose time and effect nothing. It was by bleeding till he fainted, that his life was saved ⁴. I would, however,

¹ She replied :—'*Blackmore's Life* is admirable ; who says I don't like it ? I like all the Whig Lives prodigiously.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 182.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 185.

³ 'Life is not weak enough to be destroyed by this popgun artillery of tea and coffee.'—CHEYNE. Quoted in Johnson's *Dictionary* under *Pop-gun*.

⁴ Mrs. Piozzi has the following note on this :—'Here is another allusion to that famous bleeding which certainly in Southwark did save the life of Mr. Thrale, and by its immediate effects ruined my nerves for ever.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 302. In spite of her ruined nerves she married a second time and lived till she was eighty. 'Twenty years passed in

now have him trust chiefly to vigorous and stimulating cathartics. To bleed, is only proper when there is no time for slower remedies.

Does he sleep in the night? if he sleeps, there is not much danger; any thing like wakefulness in a man either by nature or habit so uncommonly sleepy, would put me in great fear. Do not now hinder him from sleeping whenever heaviness comes upon him. Quiet rest, light food, and strong purges, will, I think, set all right. Be you vigilant, but be not frightened.

Of Mr. R——¹ I very well remember all but the name. ‘He had a nice discernment of loss and gain.’ This I thought a power not hard to be attained. What kept him out then must keep him out now; the want of a place for him. Mr. P——² then observed, that there was nothing upon which he could be employed. Matters will never be carried to extremities. Mr. P—— cannot be discharged, and he will never suffer a superiour. That voluntary submission to a new mind is not a heroick quality; but it has always been among us, and therefore I mind it less³.

The expedition to foreign parts you will not much encourage, and you need not, I think, make any great effort to oppose it; for it is as likely to put us out of the way to mischief, as to bring us into it. We can have no projects in Italy. Exercise may relieve the body, and variety will amuse the mind. The expence will not be greater than at home in the regular course of life. And we shall be safe from B—— and G——, and all instigators to schemes of waste. *Si te fata ferant, fer fata.*

Piozzi’s enchanting society seemed,’ she said, ‘like a happy dream of twenty hours.’ *Ib.* p. 305.

¹ Mrs. Thrale had written to Johnson on the 20th:—‘We had a visit yesterday from Mr. R——; whom perhaps you remember, perhaps not: but our morning conversation with him will not be easily forgotten by me, I thought it would drive me wild upon the spot.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 180. He was probably some schemer or projector who had

designs on Mr. Thrale’s purse.

² Perkins, no doubt.

³ See *ante*, i. 192, *n.* 3, for the way in which Mr. Thrale had been duped. ‘Some fellow,’ writes Mrs. Piozzi, ‘had incited our master to begin a new and expensive building to the amount of £20,000, after the progress of which he was ever inquisitive, and kept the plan of it in his bedchamber.’ Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 302.

The

The chief wish that I form is, that Mr. Thrale could be made to understand his true state ; to know that he is tottering upon a point ; to consider every change of his mental character as the symptom of a disease ; to distrust any opinions or purposes that shoot up in his thoughts ; to think that violent mirth is the foam, and deep sadness the subsidence of a morbid fermentation ; to watch himself, and counteract by experienced remedies every new tendency, or uncommon sensation. This is a new and an ungrateful employment ; but without this self-examination he never can be safe. You must try to teach it, and he to learn it gradually, and in this my sweet Queeney must help you ; I am glad to hear of her vigilance and observation. She is my pupil.

I suppose the S—— scheme is now past ; I saw no great harm in it, though perhaps no good. Do not suffer little things to embarrass you. Our great work is constant temperance, and frequent, very frequent evacuation ; and that they may not be interrupted, conviction of their necessity is to be prudently inculcated¹.

I am not at present so much distressed as you, because I think your present method likely to be efficacious. Dejection may indeed follow, and I should dread it from too copious bleeding ; for as purges are more under command, and more concurrent with the agency of nature, they seldom effect any irremediable change. However, we must expect after such a disease, that the mind will fluctuate long before it finds its center.

I will not tell you, nor Master, nor Queeney, how I long to be among you ; but I would be glad to know when we are to meet, and hope our meeting will be cheerful.

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

703.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, August 25, 1780.

Yesterday I could write but about one thing. I am sorry

¹ What taste in a woman to publish these and such like passages about the

treatment proper for her husband !

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 189.

to find from my dear Queeney's letter to-day, that Mr. Thrale's sleep was too much shortened. He begins however now, she says, to recover it. Sound sleep will be the surest token of returning health. The swelling of his legs has nothing in it dangerous; it is the natural consequence of lax muscles, and when the laxity is known to be artificial, need not give any uneasiness. I told you so formerly. Every thing that I have told you about my dear master has been true. Let him take purgatives, and let him sleep. Bleeding seems to have been necessary now; but it was become necessary only by the omission of purges. Bleeding is only for exigences.

I wish you or Queeney would write to me every post while the danger lasts. I will come if I can do any good, or prevent any evil.

For any other purpose, I suppose, now poor Sam: may be spared; you are regaled with Greek and Latin, and you are *Thralia Castalio semper amata choro*; and you have a daughter equal to yourself. I shall have enough to do with one and the other. Your admirer has more Greek than poetry; he was however worth the conquest, though you had conquered me. Whether you can hold him as fast, there may be *some dram of a scruple*¹, for he thinks you have full tongue enough, as appears by some of his verses; he will leave you for somebody that will let him take his turn, and then I may come in again: for, I tell you, nobody loves you so well, and therefore never think of changing like the moon, and *being constant only in your inconstancy*².

I have not dined out for some time but with Renny or Sir Joshua; and next week Sir Joshua goes to Devonshire³, and Renny to Richmond, and I am left by myself. I wish I could say *nunquam minus*, &c.⁴, but I am not diligent.

¹ 'No dram of a scruple.' *Twelfth Night*, Act iii. sc. 4.

² 'The world's a scene of changes; and to be Constant in Nature were inconstancy.'

COWLEY. *Inconstancy*: Johnson's *English Poets*, ed. 1790, viii. 13.

³ See Leslie and Taylor's *Life of Reynolds*, ii. 305. In her brother's absence Miss Reynolds very likely stayed at his house at Richmond.

⁴ 'P. Scipionem, Marce fili, eum qui primus Africanus appellatus est, dicere solitum scripsit Cato, qui fuit ejus fere aequalis, numquam se minus

I am afraid that I shall not see Lichfield this year, yet it would please me to shew my friends how much better I am grown: but I am not grown, I am afraid, less idle; and of idleness I am now paying the fine by having no leisure.

Does the expedition to Sir John Shelly's¹ go on? The first week of September is now at no great distance; nor the eighteenth day, which concludes another of my wretched years². It is time to have done.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

704.

TO A YOUNG CLERGYMAN.

Bolt Court, August 30, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 436.

705.

TO VISCOUNTESS SOUTHWELL³.

MADAM,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Sept. 9, 1780.

Among the numerous addresses of condolence which your great loss must have occasioned, be pleased to receive this from one whose name perhaps you have never heard, and to whom your ladyship is known only by the reputation of your virtue, and to whom your lord was known only by his kindness and beneficence.

Your ladyship is now again summoned to exert that piety of which you once gave, in a state of pain and danger, so illustrious an example⁴; and your lord's beneficence may be still continued by those who with his fortune inherit his virtues.

otiosum esse quam quum otiosus, nec minus solum quam quum solus esset.'—CICERO. *De Officiis*, iii. 1. Burton, introducing the quotation in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. 1660, p. 89, translates it:—'Never less solitary than when he was alone, never more busy than when he seemed to be most idle.'

¹ *Ante*, ii. 44, 73.

² On his birth-day he recorded:—'I am now beginning the seventy-second year of my life with more

strength of body and greater vigour of mind than I think is common at that age.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 185.

³ First published in Malone's *Boswell*. Viscountess Southwell was the wife of Thomas George, third Baron and first Viscount Southwell, who died on August 29 of this year. Debrett's *Peerage*, ed. 1820, ii. 1135.

⁴ 'The "illustrious example of piety and fortitude" to which Dr. Johnson alludes, was the submitting, when past her fiftieth year, to an

I hope

I hope to be forgiven the liberty which I shall take of informing your ladyship, that Mr. Mauritius Lowe, a son of your late lord's father¹, had, by my recommendation to your lord, a quarterly allowance of ten pounds, the last of which, due July 26, he has not received: he was in hourly hope of his remittance, and flattered himself that on October 26, he should have received the whole half-year's bounty, when he was struck with the dreadful news of his benefactor's death.

May I presume to hope, that his want, his relation, and his merit, which excited his lordship's charity, will continue to have the same effect upon those whom he has left behind; and that, though he has lost one friend, he may not yet be destitute. Your ladyship's charity cannot easily be exerted where it is wanted more; and to a mind like yours, distress is a sufficient recommendation.

I hope to be allowed the honour of being,

Madam, &c.,

To Viscountess Southwell, Dublin.

SAM: JOHNSON.

706.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN².

SIR,

Having lost our Election at Southwark we are looking for a Borough less uncertain³. If you can find by enquiry any seat to be had, as seats are had without natural interest, you will by giving immediate notice do a great favour to Mr. Thrale. The messenger shall call to-morrow for your answer. There are, I

extremely painful surgical operation, which she endured with extraordinary firmness and composure, not allowing herself to be tied to her chair, nor uttering a single moan.' — MALONE.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 66, and *post*, Letter of October 22, 1782.

² From the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison of Font-hill House.

³ The poll did not close till two days after Johnson wrote (*ante*, ii. 154, *n.* 2); but Thrale was so far behind the other two candidates that his defeat was certain. Johnson wrote to Boswell on October 17:— 'Mr. Thrale's loss of health has lost him the election.' *Life*, iii. 442. For Johnson's identification of himself with the Thrales see *ante*, i. 194, *n.* 1.

suppose

suppose, men who transact these affairs, but we do not know them¹. Be so kind as to give us what information you can.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Sept. 13, 1780.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To William Strahan, Esq.

707.

SIR,

TO THE REVEREND SAMUEL HARDY².

I should be very sorry to be thought capable of treating with neglect or disrespect such a Man as You, or such an attempt as yours. I certainly wrote my opinion such as it was, long ago. I did not value it enough to keep a copy, and therefore must now tell it again, when the remembrance of your arguments is weakened by time.

You will be pleased, Sir, to recollect that I professed myself unskilful in Biblical criticism; my profession was very sincere, and I am far from desiring to obtrude my notions as decisive.

I admitted without difficulty your *prophecy by action*, all types are prophecies of that kind. But I know not whether the admissions of such prophecies will support your interpretation as there seems to be no action done.

¹ Johnson might here have been properly reminded of what he had said five years earlier, that 'the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into Parliament.' *Life*, ii. 339.

² From the original in the possession of the Rev. John W. Hardy, Hildenborough, Kent, great-grandson of the divine to whom it is addressed.

The Rev. Samuel Hardy, D.D., afterwards Rector of Little Blakenham, Suffolk, and at this time Afternoon Lecturer at the Parish Church of Enfield, Middlesex, published in 1784 *The Scripture - Account of the Nature and ends of the Holy*

Eucharist. In it he maintains (p. 4) 'that the sixth chapter of St. John is to be *primarily* interpreted of the *Eucharist*.' The miracle of the loaves was, he goes on to assert, 'a *Prophecy by Action*' (p. 21). He indicates passages in the Old Testament where also may be found other *Prophecies by Action* (pp. 15-19). He begins his Preface by saying:—'Afflicted as I have been in body by the excruciating tortures of the gout; distressed as I have been in mind by the barbarous murder of my son.'

In Nichols's *Lit. Hist.*, iv. 709, there is a slight notice of Dr. Hardy and of his son, the Rector of Loughborough.

Whether your explication or that which is generally received be considered as true, the use and importance of the Sacrament is the same, and therefore I cannot think the question such as in the present disposition of the world can properly or usefully be moved. Why should you run the hazard of being wrong, when Religion gains nothing by your being right?

Your arguments from the Old Testament do not appear to me to have any force, or to be applied with any probability to your present purpose. You will gain more upon the reader by omitting them, and trusting only to the passage in itself and to general reasoning. And if you publish your thoughts I think it best to give them the appearance rather of enquiry and conjecture than of assertion and dogmatism.

Once more, Sir, I do not pretend to decide the question which was new to me, and of which I have not perhaps the previous knowledge necessary to the examination. Enquire of men more learned in the Scriptures. You have from me the respect due to all diligent searchers after sacred Truth, and my wishes that you may be long able to continue your studies, to your own improvement, and instruction of others.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street,
Sept. 23, 1780.

SAM: JOHNSON.

708.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], October 17, 1780. Published in the *Life*, iii. 441.

709.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

SIR,

I think you never need send back the revises unless some-

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 11.

Nine days earlier Johnson, after telling Boswell of Thrale's loss of the election, continued:—'He is now going to Brighthelmston, and expects

me to go with him; and how long I shall stay, I cannot tell. I do not much like the place, but yet I shall go, and stay while my stay is desired.' *Life*, iii. 442.

thing

thing important occurs. Little things, if I omit them, you will do me the favour of setting right yourself. Our post is awkward as you will find, and I fancy you will find it best to send two sheets at once.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Brighthelmstone,

Oct. 26, 1780.

To Mr. Nicol.

SAM: JOHNSON.

710.

TO MRS. [MISS] PROWSE¹.

MADAM,

I return you very sincere and respectful thanks for all your favours. You have, I see, sent guineas when I expected only pounds. It was beside my intention that you should make so much enquiry after Johnson. What can be known of him must start up by accident. He was not a Native of your town or country, but an adventurer who came from a distant part in quest of a livelihood, and did not stay a year. He came in 36, and went away in 37. He was likely enough to attract notice while he staid, as a lively noisy man, that loved company. His memory might probably continue for some time in some favourite alehouse. But after so many years perhaps there is no man left that remembers him. He was my near relation.

The unfortunate woman for whom your excellent Mother has so kindly made provision is, in her way, well. I am now sending her some cloaths [*sic*]. Of her cure there is no hope.

Be pleased, Madam, to accept the good wishes and grateful regard of,

Madam,

Your most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

Dec. 9, 1780.

SAM: JOHNSON.

[Leaf torn off, no address.]

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. v. 441. Copied by me from the original in the possession of the Rev. Edward B. Edgell. For the

sum of money which was sent to Johnson, and for an account of his 'near relation,' and the 'unfortunate woman,' see *ante*, ii. 194.

711.

TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE¹.

Dec. 30, 1780.

SIR,

I hope you will forgive the liberty I take, in soliciting your interposition with his grace the archbishop : my first petition was successful, and I therefore venture on a second.

The matron of the Chartreux is about to resign her place ; and Mrs. Desmoulins, a daughter of the late Dr. Swinfen, who was well known to your father², is desirous of succeeding her. She has been accustomed by keeping a boarding-school to the care of children, and I think is very likely to discharge her duty. She is in great distress, and therefore may probably receive the benefit of a charitable foundation. If you wish to see her, she will be willing to give an account of herself.

If you shall be pleased, Sir, to mention her favourably to his grace, you will do a great act of kindness, to,

Sir,

Yours, &c.,

To the Rev. Dr. Vyse at Lambeth.

SAM: JOHNSON.

712.

TO WARREN HASTINGS.

[London], January 29, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 70.

The date is wrongly given by Boswell as January 9. The original is in the British Museum.

713.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN³.

SIR,

Having now done my lives I shall have money to receive, and shall be glad to add to it what remains due for the Hebrides, which you cannot charge [me] with grasping very rapaciously⁴.

¹ First published in Malone's *Boswell*. For Dr. Vyse and Johnson's 'first petition' about the Chartreux or Charter House, see *ante*, ii. 14.

² Dr. Vyse's father was a Lichfield Clergyman, and Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, was a physician of the same city.

³ From the original in the possession of Mr. Frederick Barker, of 41 Gunterstone Road, West Kensington.

⁴ *The Journey to the Hebrides* was published at the beginning of 1775. Four thousand copies were printed. A second edition was not called for till 1785. *Life*, ii. 310.

The price was two hundred guineas or pounds; I think first pounds then guineas¹. I have had one hundred.

There is likewise something due for the political pamphlets², which I left without bargain to your liberality and Mr. Cadell's. Of this you will likewise think that I may have all together.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

March 5, 1781.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To William Strahan, Esq.

714.

TO THOMAS CADELL.

[London] March 5, 1781.

In Messrs Puttick and Simpson's Auction Catalogue for December 19, 1850, Lot 300 is an autograph Letter of Johnson to Mr. Cadell, dated March 5, 1781:—'Desiring payment to be made for some sets of the *Poets* and *Lives* sent on his account to Mr. Boswell. He refers to his last work, the *Lives of the Poets*, in the conclusion of the letter. "I am glad that the work is at last done."

Johnson 'sent a set both of the *Lives* and the *Poets* to dear Mrs. Boswell in acknowledgment of her marmalade.' *Life*, iii. 372.

This Letter was sold by Messrs. Sotheby and Co. on May 10, 1875, for £3 17s. 6d. (Lot 97).

715.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], March 14, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 71.

716.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London, April 4, 1781.] Published in the *Life*, iv. 84.

¹ Dilly, the bookseller, said:—'As to the terms it was left entirely to the Doctor to name his own; he mentioned two hundred guineas; it was immediately agreed to.' *Life*, iii. 111. 'The booksellers spontaneously added a third hundred.' *Ib.* iv. 35, n. 3. Malone says that 'had he asked one thousand, or even

fifteen hundred guineas, the book-sellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it.' *Ib.* iii. 111, n. 1. See *ante*, i. 79, n. 1.

² His four political pamphlets were collected into a volume in 1776, with the title *Political Tracts*. *Life*, ii. 315.

717.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST MADAM,

London, April 5, 1781.

Of your injunctions, to pray for you and write to you, I hope to leave neither unobserved; and I hope to find you willing in a short time to alleviate your trouble by some other exercise of the mind. I am not without my part of the calamity. No death since that of my wife has ever oppressed me like this². But let us remember, that we are in the hands of Him who knows when to give and when to take away; who will look upon us with mercy through all our variations of existence, and who invites us to call on him in the day of trouble. Call upon him in this great revolution of life, and call with confidence. You will

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 191.

Boswell who had come up to London on March 19 'had found Mr. Thrale very ill. He had removed to a house in Grosvenor Square. I was sorry,' he adds, 'to see him sadly changed in his appearance.' *Life*, iv. 72. Nevertheless the usual hospitality went on. Miss Burney describes 'a very gay party to dinner' less than a week before his death. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 14. A note which she had from Mrs. Thrale 'is endorsed:—"Written a few hours after the death of Mr. Thrale, which happened by a sudden stroke of apoplexy on the morning of a day on which half the fashion of London had been invited to an assembly at his house."' *Ib.* p. 15. Johnson recorded in his *Diary*:—"At night I was called to him, and found him senseless in strong convulsions. I staid in the room except that I visited Mrs. Thrale twice.' Johnson said:—"His servants would have waited upon him in this awful period, and why not his friend?" *Life*, iv. 84, n. 4.

As Mrs. Thrale had fled to Bath

after her son's death (*Life*, iii. 6, n. 1) so she hurried away from her dead husband. 'Pepys,' she writes, 'came at ten [on the night Mr. Thrale was attacked], and never left the house till early light showed me the way to Streatham; and from thence, hoping still less disturbance, to Brighthelmston, where we had a house of our own, and whither you will see the letters all addressed.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 304. Thrale died about five o'clock in the morning. *Life*, iv. 84, n. 4.

² Yet he had lost 'his beloved friend Dr. Bathurst, of whom he hardly ever spoke without tears in his eyes' (*Life*, i. 190), and his mother, 'whose death was one of the few calamities,' he said, 'on which he thought with terror' (*ante*, i. 20); not to mention Goldsmith and Beauclerk. See *ante*, ii. 100, where he writes to Mrs. Thrale:—"There is nobody left for me to care about but you and my master, and I have now for many years known the value of his friendship, and the importance of his life, too well not to have him very near my heart.'

then find comfort for the past, and support for the future. He that has given you happiness in marriage, to a degree of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous, can give you another mode of happiness as a mother¹; and at last, the happiness of losing all temporal cares in the thoughts of an eternity in heaven.

I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour; first implore the blessing of God, and [then employ] those means which he puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds; a mind occupied by lawful business, has little room for useless regret².

We read the will to-day³; but I will not fill my first letter with any other account than that, with all my zeal for your advantage, I am satisfied; and that the other executors⁴, more

¹ Five months later she recorded or pretended to record in her Journal:—'September, 1781.—My five fair daughters too! I have so good a pretence to wish for long life to see them settled. Like the old fellow in "Lucian" one is never at a loss for an excuse. They are five lovely creatures to be sure, but they love not me. Is it my fault or theirs?' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 342. Two years after her husband's death she wrote:—'Mr. Thrale had not much heart, but his fair daughters have none at all.' *Ib.* p. 344. Of these five daughters the eldest was at the time of their father's death sixteen, and the youngest two. This last died two years later—not five years old and without a heart. *Post*, Letter of May 1, 1783.

² Gibbon wrote to Lord Sheffield on hearing of the death of Lady Sheffield:—'I will not expatiate on those common-place topics which have never dried a single tear; but let me advise, let me urge you to force yourself into business, as I would try to force myself into study. The mind must not be idle; if it be not

exercised on external objects it will prey on its own vitals.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 400.

³ In a long note on this passage Mrs. Thrale writes:—'It was neither kind or civil, you will say, to open the will in my absence. . . . My husband left me the interest of £50,000 for my life, doubtless in return for my diligence during our distresses in 1772, because it is specified to be given over and above what was provided in our marriage settlement. He left me also the plate, pictures and linen of both houses, forgetting even to name Brighthelmstone, so all I had bought for *that* place fell to the ladies [her daughters] who said loudly what a wretched match their *poor* papa had made.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 293.

⁴ Miss Burney, who had been staying with Mrs. Thrale, wrote on April 29:—'The four executors, Mr. Cator, Mr. Crutchley, Mr. Henry Smith and Dr. Johnson have all behaved generously and honourably. She is to carry on the business jointly with them.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 20.

used to consider property than I, commended it for wisdom and equity. Yet why should I not tell you that you have five hundred pounds for your immediate expenses, and two thousand pounds a-year, with both the houses and all the goods?

Let us pray for one another, that the time, whether long or short, that shall yet be granted us, may be well spent; and that when this life, which at the longest is very short, shall come to an end, a better may begin which shall never end.

I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

718.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

April 7, 1781.

I hope you begin to find your mind grow clearer. My part of the loss hangs upon me. I have lost a friend of boundless kindness at an age when it is very unlikely that I should find another².

If you think change of place likely to relieve you, there is no reason why you should not go to Bath³; the distances are unequal, but with regard to practice and business they are the same. It is a day's journey from either place; and the post is more expeditious and certain to Bath⁴. Consult only your own inclination, for there is really no other principle of choice. God direct and bless you.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 193.

² On his next birthday he wrote:—'My first knowledge of Thrale was in 1765. I enjoyed his favour for almost a fourth part of my life.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 191. Miss Burney records how he had often with her 'long and melancholy discourses about our dear deceased master, whom indeed he regrets incessantly.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 63.

³ Two or three weeks later he wrote to Mrs. Strahan who had lost her son:—'Let me counsel you not

to waste your health in unprofitable sorrow, but go to Bath, and endeavour to prolong your own life.' *Life*, iv. 100.

⁴ The other place was Brighton, to which, at this season of the year, the post went only four days a week, whereas to Bath it went every night but Sunday. See *post*, p. 216, where it is stated that a letter written by Mrs. Thrale at Brighton on Wednesday was received by Johnson on Saturday.

Mr. C—— has offered Mr. P——¹ money, but it was not wanted. I hope we shall all do all we can to make you less unhappy, and you must do all you can for yourself. What we, or what you can do, will for a time be but little; yet certainly that calamity which may be considered as doomed to fall inevitably on half mankind, is not finally without alleviation².

It is something for me, that as I have not the decrepitude I have not the callousness of old age³. I hope in time to be less afflicted.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

719.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

London, April 9, 1781.

That you are gradually recovering your tranquillity, is the effect to be humbly expected from trust in God. Do not represent life as darker than it is. Your loss has been very great, but you retain more than almost any other can hope to possess. You are high in the opinion of mankind; you have children from whom much pleasure may be expected; and that you will find many friends, you have no reason to doubt. Of my friendship, be it worth more or less, I hope you think yourself certain, without much art or care. It will not be easy for me to repay the benefits that I have received; but I hope to be always ready at your call. Our sorrow has different effects; you are withdrawn into solitude, and I am driven into company⁵. I am afraid of

¹ 'Cator and Perkins.'—BARETTI. Cator was one of the executors; he offered no doubt to advance money to Perkins, the Superintendent of the Brewery, if any were needed.

² I think that Johnson says here what he said to Mr. Elphinston on the death of his wife (*ante*, ii. 67):—'In the condition of mortal beings one must lose another. What would be the wretchedness of life, if there was not something always in view, some Being, immutable and unfailing, to whose mercy man may have recourse!'

³ For Johnson's not having the

decrepitude of old age, see *ante*, ii. 202, *n.* 2, and *Life*, iii. 302, 336. For the callousness, see *Rambler*, No. 78, where he writes:—'I believe men may be generally observed to grow less tender as they advance in age.' Chesterfield says:—'The heart never grows better by age; I fear rather worse; always harder.' *Letters to his Son*, iii. 18.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 195.

⁵ Two days after Thrale's death Johnson carried Boswell to his City Club in St. Paul's Church-yard, composed of men who were not *patriots*. *Life*, iv. 87.

thinking

thinking what I have lost. I never had such a friend before. Let me have your prayers and those of my dear Queeney.

The prudence and resolution of your design to return so soon to your business and your duty deserves great praise; I shall communicate it on Wednesday to the other executors. Be pleased to let me know whether you would have me come to Streatham to receive you, or stay here till the next day.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

720.

TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE¹.

REV. SIR,

Bolt Court, April 10, 1781.

The bearer is one of my old friends, a man of great learning, whom the chancellor has been pleased to nominate to the Chaireux. He attends his grace the archbishop, to take the oath required; and being a modest scholar, will escape embarrassment, if you are so kind as to introduce him, by which you will do a kindness to a man of great merit, and add another to those favours which have already been conferred by you on,

Sir, &c.,

To the Rev. Dr. Vyse at Lambeth.

SAM: JOHNSON.

721.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, April 11, 1781.

I am glad to hear from my dear Miss³, that you have recovered tranquillity enough to think on bathing; but there is no disposition in the world to leave you long to yourself. Mr. P—— pretends that your absence produces a thousand difficulties, which I believe it does not produce. He frights Mr. C * * *⁴. Mr. C—— is of my mind, that there is no

¹ Published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 654.

The bearer of the letter was Johnson's old amanuensis, Alexander Macbean, whom 'by the favour of Lord Thurlow he got admitted a poor brother of the Charter-house.' *Life*, i. 187; iii. 441. For Macbean's death see *post*; Letter of June 26, 1784.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 196.

³ 'Miss Thrale,' wrote Miss Burney on April 29, 'is steady and constant, and very sincerely grieved for her father.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 20.

⁴ 'P—— is Perkins and C—— Cator.' BARETTI.

need of hurry. I would not have this importunity give you any alarm or disturbance; but, to pacify it, come as soon as you can prevail upon your mind to mingle with business. I think business the best remedy for grief as soon as it can be admitted.

We met to-day, and were told of mountainous difficulties, till I was provoked to tell them, that if there were really so much to do and suffer, there would be no executors in the world¹. Do not suffer yourself to be terrified.

I comfort you, and hope God will bless and support you; but I feel myself like a man beginning a new course of life. I had interwoven myself with my dear friend²; but our great care ought to be, that we may be fit and ready, when in a short time we shall be called to follow him.

There is, however, no use in communicating to you my heaviness of heart. I thank dear Miss for her letter.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

722.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAREST MADAM,

London, April 12, 1781.

You will not suppose that much has happened since last night, nor indeed is this a time for talking much of loss and gain. The business of Christians is now for a few days in their own bosoms. God grant us to do it properly. I hope you gain ground on your affliction. I hope to overcome mine. You and Miss must comfort one another. May you long live happily together. I have nobody whom I expect to share my uneasiness, nor, if I could communicate it, would it be less. I give it little vent, and amuse it as I can⁴. Let us pray for one another.

¹ See *ante*, ii. 126, and *Life*, iv. 85, n. 2, for the interest Johnson had long taken in Thrale's business.

² On September 2 of this year he recorded:—'When Thrale's health was broken, for many months, I think, before his death, I constantly mentioned him in my prayers; and

after his death have made particular supplication for his surviving family to this day.' *Pr. and Med.* p. 198.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 198.

⁴ It was on this day that, though it was the day before Good Friday, he dined abroad—for the second time this Passion Week. It was true

And,

And, when we meet, we may try what fidelity and tenderness will do for us.

There is no wisdom in useless and hopeless sorrow¹; but there is something in it so like virtue, that he who is wholly without it cannot be loved, nor will by me at least be thought worthy of esteem². My next letter will be to Queeney.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

723.

TO MRS. PORTER.

London, April 12, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 89.

724.

DEAR MADAM, TO MRS. THRALE³.

April 14, 1781.

My intention was to have written this day to my dear Queeney; but I have just heard from you, and therefore this letter shall be yours. I am glad that you find the behaviour of your acquaintance such as you can commend. The world is not so unjust or unkind as it is peevishly represented. Those who deserve well seldom fail to receive from others such services as they can perform; but few have much in their power, or are so stationed as to have great leisure from their own affairs, and kindness must be commonly the exuberance of content⁴. The wretched have no compassion, they can do good only from strong principles of duty.

he dined at a Bishop's — which supplied him with that 'ingenious defence' which Boswell has preserved. *Life*, iv. 88. It is very likely however that he was, as he said, 'driven into company' by his friend's death. For *amuse* see *ante*, i. 283, n. 5.

¹ 'Johnson never grieved much for anything. His trade was wisdom.' BARETTI.

² 'BOSWELL. "But, Sir, we do not approve of a man who very soon forgets the loss of a wife or a friend." JOHNSON. "Sir, we disapprove of

him, not because he soon forgets his grief, for the sooner it is forgotten the better; but because we suppose, that if he forgets his wife or his friend soon, he has not had much affection for them.'" *Life*, iii. 137.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 199.

⁴ 'Really it is wonderful,' said Johnson, 'considering how much attention is necessary for men to take care of themselves, and ward off immediate evils which press upon them, it is wonderful how much they do for others.' *Life*, iii. 236.

I purpose

I purpose to receive you at Streatham, but wonder that you come so soon.

I sent immediately to Mr. Perkins to send you twenty pounds, and intended to secure you from disappointment by inclosing a note in this; but yours written on Wednesday 11th, came not till Saturday the 14th, and mine written to-night, will not come before you leave Brighthelmston, unless you have put Monday next for Monday sevensnight, which I suspect, as you mention no alteration of your mind.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

725.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, April 16, 1781.

As I was preparing this day to go to Streatham, according to the direction of your letter of the 11th, which I could not know, though I suspected it, to be erroneous, I received two letters, of which the first effect was, that it saved me a fruitless journey. Of these letters, that which I perceive to have been written first has no date of time or place; the second was written on the 14th, but they came together.

I forbore, because I would not disturb you, to tell you, that last week Mr. — came to talk about partnership, and was very copious. I dismissed him with nothing harsher than, *that I was not convinced*².

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 202.

² Mr. Perkins, no doubt, was the copious talker. Mrs. Piozzi writes:—‘On Mr. Thrale’s death I kept the counting-house from nine every morning till five o’clock every evening till June, when God Almighty sent us a knot of rich Quakers who bought the whole, and saved me and my coadjutors from brewing ourselves into another bankruptcy; which hardly could, I think, have been avoided, being, as we were, five in number, Cator, Crutchley, Johnson, myself and Mr. Smith, all with equal

power, yet all incapable of using it without help from Mr. Perkins, who wished to force himself into partnership, though hating the whole lot of us, save only *me*. Upon my promise however that if he would find us a purchaser, I would present his wife with my dwelling-house at the Borough and all its furniture, he soon brought forward these Quaker Barclays, and they obtained the Brewhouse a prodigious bargain. Among all my fellow-executors none but Johnson opposed selling the business. He found some odd de-

You

You will have much talk to hear. Mr. C——¹ speaks with great exuberance, but what he says, when at last he says it, is commonly right. Mr. ——² made an oration flaming with the terriffick, which I discovered to have no meaning at all; for the result was, that if we stopped payment we should lose credit.

I have written to Mr. Robson³ to send the will. There were two copies, but I know not who has them.

You are to receive five hundred pounds immediately⁴. Mr. Scrase shall certainly see the will, if you and I go to Bright-helmston on purpose, which, if we have any difficulty, may be our best expedient.

I am encouraged, dearest lady, by your spirit. The season for *agues* is now over⁵. You are in your civil character a man.

light in signing drafts for hundreds and thousands, to him a new, and, as it appeared, delightful occupation.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 294.

Miss Burney thus writes of the day of the sale:—"Mrs. Thrale went early to town, to meet all the executors, and Mr. Barclay, the Quaker, who was the bidder. She was in great agitation of mind, and told me if all went well she would wave a white handkerchief out of the coach-window. Four o'clock came and dinner was ready, and no Mrs. Thrale. Queeny and I went out upon the lawn, where we sauntered in eager expectation, till near six, and then the coach appeared in sight, and a white handkerchief was waved from it.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 34. The brewery was sold for £135,000. *Life*, iv. 132. See *post*, p. 222.

I hoped to ascertain from Burke's *Landed Gentry* which of the descendants of the author of the *Apology for Quakers* purchased the great Brewery; but apparently it was thought too trifling a matter in the history of the family to require any record.

¹ 'Cator.' BARETTI. Miss Burney gives the following specimen of his talk at this time. 'One speech (she adds) will do for a thousand:—"As to this here question of Lord Lyttelton I can't speak to it to the purpose, as I have not read his *Life*; for I have only read the *Life of Pope*; I have got the books though, for I sent for them last week, and they came to me on Wednesday, and then I began them; but I have not yet read *Lord Lyttelton*. *Pope* I have begun, and that is what I am now reading. But what I have to say about Lord Lyttelton is this here; Mr. Seward says that Lord Lyttelton's steward dunned Mr. Shenstone for his rent, by which I understand he was a tenant of Lord Lyttelton's. Well, if he was a tenant of Lord Lyttelton's, why should not he pay his rent?" Who could contradict this?' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 48.

² 'Perkins.' BARETTI.

³ See next letter.

⁴ In accordance with the direction in the will. *Ante*, ii. 211.

⁵ 'This ague fit of fear is over-blown.'

Richard II, Act iii. sc. 2, l. 190.

You

You may sue and be sued¹. If you apply to business perhaps half the mind which you have exercised upon knowledge and elegance, you will need little help, what help however I can give you, will, I hope, be always at call.

(Make my compliments to Mr. Scrase.)

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

726.

TO JOHN NICHOLS².

Mr. Johnson desires Mr. Nicol to send him a set of the last lives, and would be glad to know how the octavo edition goes forward.

Monday, April 16, 1781.

To Mr. Nicol.

727.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

April 17, 1781.

Mr. Norris (Mr. Robson's partner)⁴ promised to send the will to-morrow; you will therefore have it before you have this letter. When you have talked with Mr. Scrase, write diligently down all that you can remember, and, where you have any difficulties, ask him again, and rather stay where you are a few days longer than come away with imperfect information.

¹ 'If the wife be injured in her person or her property she can bring no action for redress without her husband's concurrence, and in his name as well as her own; neither can she be sued, without making the husband a defendant.' Blackstone's *Commentaries*, ed. 1775, i. 443. By the death of her husband she regained the rights of a single woman. By the Married Women's Property Act, 1882 (45 and 46 Vict. c. 75), 'a married woman shall be capable of entering into and rendering herself liable in respect of and to the extent of her separate property on any contract, and of *suing and being sued*, either in contract or in tort, or other-

wise, in all respects as if she were a feme sole.'

² First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 11.

The *Lives* were published separately as well as in the collected edition of the Poets. In 1779 four volumes duodecimo were published, and in 1781 the remaining six. In the same year an octavo edition in four volumes was brought out.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 200.

This letter is misplaced by Mrs. Piozzi, as it should have followed, not preceded, that of April 16.

⁴ No doubt they were Mr. Thrale's solicitors.

The

The executors will hardly meet till you come, for we have nothing to do till we go all together to prove the will.

I have not had a second visit from Mr. —, for he found his discourse to me very unavailing. I was dry; but if he goes to — he will be overpowered with words as good as his own. — appears a very modest inoffensive man, not likely to give any trouble¹. The difficulty of finding executors Mr. Scrase has formerly told you, and among all your acquaintance, except P——, whom you pressed into the service, and who would perhaps have deserted it², I do not see with whom you could have been more commodiously connected. They all mean well, and will, I think, all concur.

Miss told me that you intended to bathe; it is right: all external things are diversions: let her bathe too. I regain that tranquillity which irremediable misfortunes necessarily admit, and do not, I hope, think on what I have lost, without grateful recollection of what I have enjoyed.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

728.

TO MRS. STRAHAN.

[London], April 23, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 100.

729.

MADAM, TO MRS. [MISS] PROWSE³.

Having lately had a melancholy occasion to search my

¹ The first of these three men is, I conjecture, Perkins, the second Crutchley, and the third Henry Smith (*ante*, ii. 210, *n.* 4). Mrs. Piozzi says:—‘Crutchley hated Perkins, and lived upon the verge of a quarrel with him every day while they acted together. Smith cursed the whole business, and wondered what his relation, Mr. Thrale, could mean by leaving him £200, he said, and such a burden on his back to bear for it.’ Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 295.

² See *ante*, ii. 126, for Johnson’s letter about trustees. Perkins was not an executor, so that Johnson means, I think, that Mrs. Thrale had tried to have him made one.

³ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. v. 441. Copied by me from the original in the possession of the Rev. Edward B. Edgell, of Bromham Rectory, Chippenham.

For the subject of the Letter see *ante*, ii. 193.

chests

chests for mourning, I found in one of the pockets this tattered letter, which seems to prove that you have remitted to me more money than was due¹?

You see, Madam, that I was paid, or might have been paid by your good Mother to -76. It is not likely that I neglected to call on the Banker, yet it is possible, but the Banker's books will clear the question. I am willing to suppose that I received it, for it would be hard that Charity should be cheated².

In a few weeks will be published with my name some Lives of the Poets³, of which if you will be pleased to favour me by accepting a copy, I beg that you will let me know to whom in London I may send them, that they may be conveyed to you.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble Servant,

N.B. *Bolt Court*, Fleet Street, London.

SAM: JOHNSON.

May 7, 1781.

730.

TO MR. PERKINS.

[London], June 2, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 118.

731.

TO JOHN NICHOLS⁴.

SIR,

My desire being to complete the sets of lives which I have formerly presented to my friends, I have occasion for few of the

¹ The letter, as is shown in the next paragraph, was written in 1776. In the spring of that year he wore, no doubt, the mourning for the funeral of young Harry Thrale, as he now wore it for the funeral of Harry's father. He had attended also Garrick's funeral in 1779. *Life*, iv. 208.

² On the blank sheet of the paper is written:—'On searching Child's accounts I found the year 76 had been paid. I therefore omitted the present year's payment, and acknowledged the Books which I soon after

received.' She had sent him back-payments for six years from 1780. *Ante*, ii. 193, *n.* 4. She should, it seems, have omitted two years' payments, unless no payment had been made for 1775.

³ The octavo edition in four volumes, published this year.

⁴ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 11.

Johnson had presented the first four volumes published in 1779 to his friends. With the issue of the last six in 1781 he had received fresh sets of the first four, of most of which

first

first volumes, of which by some misapprehension I have received a great number, which I desire to exchange for the latter volumes. I wish success to the new edition.

Please to present to Mr. Steevens a complete set of the *Lives* in 12mo¹.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

June 10, 1781.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To Mr. Nicol.

732.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

Bolt Court, June 16, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 132.

733.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], June 23, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 133.

734.

TO MISS REYNOLDS².

DEAR MADAM,

25th June, 1781.

You may give the book to Mrs. Horneck³, and I will give you another for yourself.

I am afraid there is no hope of Mrs. Thrale's custom for your pictures; but, if you please, I will mention it. She cannot make a pension out of her jointure⁴.

I will bring the papers myself.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

he had no need. What he wanted was enough of the last six volumes to complete the sets of those friends to whom he had given the first four. 'The new edition' was the one in octavo.

¹ Steevens had supplied him with some anecdotes and quotations. *Life*, iv. 37.

² First published in Croker's *Bos-*

well, page 697.

³ *Ante*, i. 344, n. 2.

⁴ 'Miss Reynolds, it seems, wished to dispose of her collection, and thought that Mrs. Thrale might purchase and pay for it by an annuity.' CROKER. She had bought a few very fine pictures in Paris at a very small price. Northcote's *Life of Reynolds*, i. 202.

To

735.

TO [MR. PERKINS]¹.

SIR,

Mrs. Thrale has informed me of the iron resolution of Mr. Cator and Mr. Crutchley. They have law on their side, and cannot be opposed. What then can be done? If time will do any thing for you, that you may apply to your friends, I will struggle for that. I think Mr. Barclay's interest so much requires your concurrence and assistance, that if you cannot procure security, he must help you. His difficulties are only niceties. Do not be bashful, use all the efforts that you can.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

July 2, 1781.

SAM: JOHNSON.

I shall come to you this morning, but I will meet Mrs. Thrale to-morrow about twelve.

736.

TO MISS BURNEY².

DEAR MADAM,

Pray let these books be sent after the former to the gentleman whose name I do not know.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

July 9, 1781.

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. W. G. Anderson, of Beechhill, Fairfield, Liverpool.

On the day on which this letter was written, Miss Burney in her Diary praises 'Mrs. Thrale's generosity to Mr. Perkins, whom she does not like. Everything in her power is she doing to establish him comfortably in the Brewhouse, even to the lending all her own money that is in the Stocks.' Miss Burney adds that Mr. Crutchley, 'though he cared

not himself if Perkins were drowned, offered to lend him a thousand pounds, merely by way of giving pleasure to Mrs. Thrale.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 72. Perkins, who had knowledge of the business, had not, it is clear, capital enough at his command to pay for his share.

² First published in *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ed. 1889, i. 169.

The gentleman was William Bewly a country-surgeon, 'well known in Norfolk by the name of the *Philoso-*

737.

TO THOMAS ASTLE.

[London], July 17, 1781. Published in the *Life*, iv. 133.

738.

TO MISS REYNOLDS¹.

DEAREST MADAM,

Bolt Court, July 21, 1781.

There is in these [*papers?*] such force of comprehension, such nicety of observation, as Locke or Pascal might be proud of. This I say with an intention to have you think I speak my opinion. They cannot, however, be printed in their present state. Many of your notions seem not very clear in your own mind; many are not sufficiently developed and expanded for the common reader: the expression almost every where wants to

pher of Massingham, a great admirer of Johnson's writings. 'When Dr. Burney visited Dr. Johnson at the Temple he arrived there before he was up. Being shown into the room where he was to breakfast, finding himself alone, he examined the contents of the apartment, to try whether he could undiscovered steal any thing to send to his friend Bewley, as another relic of the admirable Dr. Johnson. But finding nothing better to his purpose, he cut some bristles off his hearth-broom, and enclosed them in a letter to his countryenthusiast, who received them with due reverence. The Doctor was so sensible of the honour done him by a man of genius and science, to whom he was an utter stranger, that he said to Dr. Burney, "Sir, there is no man possessed of the smallest portion of modesty, but must be flattered with the admiration of such a man. I'll give him a set of my *Lives*, if he will do me the honour to accept of them."' He sent them to Dr. Burney's house directed, 'For

the Broom Gentleman.' *Life*, iv. 134; *Early Diary*, &c., i. 18, n. 1, and *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 180. The books which he now sent were the later volumes of the *Lives*.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 697.

In the sixth edition of *Boswell* (1811), iv. 143, is given a version of this letter which differs in not a few words. It was perhaps written down from memory by some one who had been allowed to read the original.

Miss Reynolds's work, writes Northcote, was called *An Essay on Taste*. 'It was privately printed, but was never published.' He gives some specimens of it, of which the following is perhaps the best:—'There is always something respectable in the object that excites the strongest ridicule, otherwise it would want the contrast which makes it ridiculous.' *Life of Reynolds*, ii. 115-8. *Respectable*, at this time, meant *worthy of respect*.

There is no copy of Miss Reynolds's work in the *British Museum*.

be

be made clearer and smoother. You may, by revisal and improvement, make it a very elegant work.

I am,

My dearest dear,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

739.

TO THE REVEREND DR. THOMAS PATTEN¹.

DEAR SIR,

Sept. 25, 1781.

It is so long since we passed any time together, that you may be allowed to have forgotten some part of my character; and I know not upon what other supposition I can pass without censure or complaint the ceremony of your address. Let me not trifle time in words, to which while we speak or write them we assign little meaning. Whenever you favour me with a letter, treat me as one that is glad of your kindness and proud of your esteem².

¹ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1819, i. 293.

Dr. Patten was Rector of Childrey near Wantage, where he died on February 28, 1790. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1790, p. 368, where is given a list of his publications. The Rev. Thomas Wilson, Head Master of Clitheroe Grammar School, published in 1782 an *Archæological Dictionary; or Classical Antiquities of the Jews, Greeks and Romans, alphabetically arranged*. It was dedicated to Johnson, who acknowledged the honour in a letter in the *Life*, iv. 162. The book is a small octavo. 'It will, I trust,' says the author in his Preface, 'be found a ready Oracle to the Student and Gentleman of Classical Taste, and an useful Remembrancer to the Man of Erudition.' A curious account of Wilson is given in some numbers of the *Preston Guardian* at the end of December, 1888.

² In his letter to Johnson, Dr. Patten had said:—'Nothing would more highly gratify my taste and my pride than a correspondence with my dear and honoured friend Johnson.' But he is afraid, he continues, of 'the Master of the Sentences.' He concludes by signing himself 'one of your most faithful and most affectionate friends.' Of his intimacy with him nothing, I believe, is known. In his letter he quotes the following lines in *Miscellany Poems on several Occasions. Written by a Lady*, 1713:—

'Now the Jonquille o'erwhelms the feeble brain,

We faint beneath the aromatic pain.'

They are the source, he says, of Pope's lines in the *Essay on Man*, i. 199:—

'Or, quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,

Die of a rose in aromatic pain?'

Gentleman's Magazine, 1819, i. 291.

The

The papers which have been sent for my perusal I am ready to inspect, if you judge my inspection necessary or useful: but indeed, I do not; for what advantage can arise from it? A Dictionary consists of independent parts, and therefore one page is not much a specimen of the rest. It does not occur to me that I can give any assistance to the Author, and for my own interest I resign it into your hands, and do not suppose that I shall ever see my name with regret where you shall think it proper to be put.

I think it, however, my duty to inform a writer who intends me so great an honour, that in my opinion he would have consulted his interest by dedicating his Work to some powerful and popular neighbour, who can give him more than a name. What will the world do but look on and laugh when one scholar dedicates to another?

If I had been consulted about this Lexicon of Antiquities while it was yet only a design, I should have recommended rather a division of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman particulars into three volumes, than a combination in one¹. The Hebrew part, at least, I would have wished to separate, as it might be made a very popular book, of which the use might be extended from men of learning down to the English reader, and which might become a concomitant to the Family Bible.

When works of a multifarious and extensive kind are undertaken in the country, the necessary books are not always known. I remember a very learned and ingenious Clergyman, of whom, when he had published Notes upon the Psalms, I enquired what was his opinion of Hammond's Commentary, and was answered, that he had never heard of it². As this gentleman has the opportunity of consulting you, it needs not be supposed that he has not heard of all the proper books; but unless he is near

¹ 'I remember,' writes Dean Percy, 'Dr. Johnson once told me he had intended in an early part of his life to compose a Dictionary of English or British Antiquities.' *Letters of Dr. Percy to George Paton*, p. 73.

² Johnson in his character of the Rev. Zachariah Mudge mentions that divine's *Notes upon the Psalms*. *Life*, iv. 77. Even Lucy Porter read Hammond's *Commentary on the Psalms*. *Ante*, i. 357.

some Library, I know not how he could peruse them; and if he is conscious that his *supellex* is *nimis angusta*¹, it would be prudent to delay his publication till his deficiencies may be supplied.

It seems not very candid to hint any suspicions of imperfection in a Work which I have not seen, yet what I have said ought to be excused, since I cannot but wish well to a learned man, who has elected me for the honour of a Dedication, and to whom I am indebted for a correspondence so valuable as yours. And I beg that I may not lose any part of his kindness, which I consider with respectful gratitude. Of you, dear Sir, I entreat that you will never again forget for so long a time,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt-court, Fleet-street.

Sept. 24, 1781.

740.

TO MAURITIUS LOWE.

Oct. 15, 1781.

In one of Messrs. Sotheby and Company's Auction Catalogues, the reference to which I have mislaid, Lot. 157 is a Letter from Dr. Johnson to Mr. Lowe, dated Oct. 15, 1781.

'Has put Mr. Kearsley's note into the hands of Mr. Allen, to whom he owes rent.'

Mr. Lowe was, I suppose, the needy Mauritius Lowe, *ante*, ii. 203. Kearsley was a bookseller in Fleet Street. *Life*, i. 214. Nichols writing of his shop describes it as 'the political storehouse of George Kearsley.' *Lit. Hist.* v. 428. Edmund Allen, the printer, was Johnson's landlord and next neighbour in Bolt Court. *Life*, iii. 141.

741.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Oxford, Oct. 17, 1781.

On Monday evening arrived at the Angel Inn at

¹ Johnson has quoted before (*ante*, i. 64) 'curta supellex' from Persius, *Satires*, iv. 52. Juvenal has ² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 205.

Oxford,

Oxford¹, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Barber², without any sinister accident.

I am here; but why am I here? On my way to Lichfield, where I believe Mrs. Aston will be glad to see me. We have known each other long, and, by consequence, are both old; and she is paralytick; and if I do not see her soon, I may see her no more in this world³. To make a visit on such considerations is to go on a melancholy errand. But such is the course of life.

This place is very empty, but there are more here whom I know, than I could have expected⁴. Young Burke⁵ has just been with me, and I have dined to day with Dr. Adams⁶, who

¹ The Angel Inn stood in the High Street, but was pulled down to make way for the New Schools. Twenty-seven years before Johnson's visit, Pitt and a party of his friends were at the window of the Inn, when a lady in the company sang *God save great George our King*. 'The chorus was re-echoed by a set of young lads drinking at a college over the way [Queen's], but with additions of rank treason.' Pitt described the scene to the House of Commons. Walpole's *George II*, ed. 1822, i. 358. Johnson and Boswell, in March, 1776, passed two evenings in the Angel 'in easy and familiar conversation.' *Life*, ii. 440, 9.

² Johnson's black servant, Frank Barber.

³ He made the following record in his Diary:—'Sunday, October 14, 1781 (properly Monday morning). I am this day about to go by Oxford and Birmingham to Lichfield and Ashbourne. The motives of my journey I hardly know. I omitted it last year, and am not willing to miss it again. Mrs. Aston will be glad, I think, to see me. We are both old, and if I put off my visit I may see her no more; perhaps she wishes for another interview. She is a very good woman.

Hector is likewise an old friend,

the only companion of my childhood that passed through the school with me. We have always loved one another. Perhaps we may be made better by some serious conversation, of which however I have no distinct hope.

At Lichfield, my native place, I hope to show a good example by frequent attendance on public worship. [Perhaps by way of penance for his habit of playing truant from church in his boyhood. *Life*, i. 67.]

At Ashbourne I hope to talk seriously with Taylor.' *Pr. and Med.* p. 201.

⁴ By October 17 one would have expected the University to be full. A young student of Queen's writing on October 7, 1779, says:—'The University is yet thin and desolate. As the term does not begin till the tenth, few of the absentees will think of returning till the last minute.' *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, p. 85. See *ante*, i. 361, n. 1.

⁵ Edmund Burke's only son, of whom the fond father is reported to have said:—'How extraordinary it is that I, and Lord Chatham, and Lord Holland, should each have a son so superior to ourselves.' Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 304. Lord Holland's son was Charles James Fox.

⁶ Master of Pembroke College.

seems fond of me. But I have not been very well. I hope I am not ill by sympathy, and that you are making haste to recover your plumpness¹ and your complexion. I left you *skinny and lean*.

To-morrow, if I can, I shall go forward², and when I see Lichfield I shall write again.

Mr. Parker, the bookseller³, sends his respects to you: I send mine to the young ladies.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

742.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, Oct. 20, 1781.

I wrote from Oxford, where I staid two days; on Thursday I went to Birmingham, and was told by Hector that I should not be well so soon as I expected; but that well I should be⁵. Mrs. Careless⁶ took me under her care, and told me when I had tea enough. On Friday I came hither, and have escaped the post-chaises all the way. Every body here is as kind as I expected, I think Lucy⁷ is kinder than ever. I am very well. Now we are both valetudinary, we shall have something to write about. We can tell each other our complaints, and give reciprocal comfort and advice, as—not to eat too much—and—not to drink too little⁸, and we may now and then add a few strictures of reproof: and so we may write and write till we can find another subject. Pray make my compliments to all the ladies, great and little.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Boswell describes Mrs. Thrale as 'short, plump, and brisk.' *Life*, i. 494.

² His 'power of departure depended upon accidental vacancies in passing coaches,' unless he would go to the expense of a post-chaise. *Ante*, i. 325.

³ For a description of Johnson's 'old friend, Sack. Parker,' see *Life*,

iv. 308. Mrs. Thrale had probably seen him when in September, 1774, she 'wandered about the University.' *Ib.* v. 459.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 205.

⁵ *Post*, p. 236.

⁶ Hector's sister, Johnson's first love. *Ante*, i. 41, n. 2.

⁷ His step-daughter, Lucy Porter.

⁸ *Ante*, i. 223, 368, 408.

TO

743.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, Oct. 23, 1781.

I had both your letters, and very little good news in either of them. The diminution of the estate, though displeasing and unexpected, must be borne, because it cannot be helped; but I do not apprehend why the other part of your income should fall short. I understood that you were to have £1,500 yearly from the money arising from the sale, and that your claim was first.

I sincerely applaud your resolution not to run out², and wish you always to save something, for that which is saved may be spent at will, and the advantages are very many of saving³ some money loose and unappropriated. If your ammunition is always ready, you may shoot advantage as it starts, or pleasure as it flies. Resolve therefore never to want money⁴.

The Gravedo⁵ is not removed, nor does it increase. My nights have commonly been bad. Mrs. Aston is much as I left her, without any new symptoms; but, between time and palsy, wearing away. Mrs. Gastrel is brisk and lively.

Burney told me that she was to go, but you will have my dear Queeney; tell her that I do not forget her, and that I hope she remembers me. Against our meeting we will both

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 206.

² Johnson in his *Dictionary* quotes from Swift:—

‘And had her stock been less, no doubt,

She must have long ago run out.’

³ Johnson, I conjecture, wrote *having*.

⁴ ‘Resolve never to be poor.’ *Life*, iv. 163.

⁵ The following note I owe to the kindness of Dr. Norman Moore. ‘*Gravedo* is commonly used as a synonym for catarrh and for coryza. Catarrh in its widest sense includes general rheumatic pains. I think that Dr. Johnson’s meaning may be

interpreted through one of his physicians, Dr. Heberden, and the term *gravedo* taken to mean a disorder with “cold in the head” accompanied by pains in the limbs.

‘Heberden says:—“Necessarium est os et fauces et nares atque oculos assidue cadere; quapropter humor manat de quibusdam glandulis, et membranis; qui si modum naturalem excedat, dicitur destillatio gravedo vel catarrhus.” He had known such an habitual *gravedo* followed by palsy, and by asthma. Both symptoms to some extent formed part of Dr. Johnson’s illness.’ See *post*, Letter of February 17, 1782.

make

make good resolutions, which on my side, I hope to keep; but such hopes are very deceitful. I would not willingly think the same of all hopes, and particularly should be loath to suspect of deceit, my hope of being always,

Dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

744.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST DEAR LADY,

[Lichfield], Oct. 27, 1781.

Your Oxford letter followed me hither, with Lichfield put upon the direction in the place of Oxford, and was received at the same time as the letter written next after it. All is therefore well.

Queeney is a naughty captious girl, that will not write because I did not remember to ask her. Pray tell her that I ask her now, and that I depend upon her for the history of her own time.

Poor Lucy's illness has left her very deaf, and, I think, very inarticulate. I can scarcely make her understand me, and she can hardly make me understand her. So here are merry doings². But she seems to like me better than she did. She eats very little, but does not fall away.

Mrs. Cobb and Peter Garrick are as you left them. Garrick's legatees at this place are very angry that they receive nothing³. Things are not quite right, though we are so far from London⁴.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 208.

² *Ante*, ii. 116.

³ Garrick left large legacies to his two brothers, sister, two nephews and a niece, 'to be paid,' he said, 'out of the residue of my personal estate which shall remain after paying the legacies [of £6,000] to my wife, and securing the annuities as aforesaid. [She was to have an annuity of £1,500 if she lived in England, and of £1,000 if she resided in Scotland, Ireland, or beyond sea.] If there shall not be sufficient to pay all the legacies, the legacies shall abate in

proportion to their legacies, and wait until the death of my wife, &c.' Davies's *Life of Garrick*, ii. 427. She perhaps outlived them all, for she survived her husband 43 years. See *post*, Letter of April 30, 1782, where Johnson writes: — 'Poor Garrick's funeral expenses are yet unpaid, though the undertaker is broken.'

⁴ 'Resolved at length from vice and London far
To breathe in distant fields a purer air.'

JOHNSON'S *London*, l. 5.

Mrs. Aston

Mrs. Aston is just as I left her. She walks no worse; but I am afraid speaks less distinctly as to her utterance. Her mind is untouched. She eats too little, and wears away. The extenuation¹ is her only bad symptom. She was glad to see me.

That naughty girl Queeney, now she is in my head again, how could she think that I did not wish to hear from her, a dear sweet.—But he must suffer who can love.

All here is gloomy; a faint struggle with the tediousness of time; a doleful confession of present misery, and the approach seen and felt of what is most dreaded and most shunned². But such is the lot of man. I am, dearest Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

745.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, Oct. 31, 1781.

It almost enrages me to be suspected of forgetting the discovery of the papers relating to Cummins's claim⁴. These papers we must grant the liberty of using, because the law will not suffer us to deny them. We may be summoned to declare what we know, and what we know is in those papers. When the evidence appears, * * * * will be directed by her lawyers to submit in quiet. I suppose it will be proper to give at first only a transcript.

Your income, diminished as it is, you may, without any painful frugality, make sufficient. I wish your health were as much in your power, and the effects of abstinence were as certain as those of parsimony. Of your regimen I do not think with much approbation; it is only palliative, and crops the disease, but does not eradicate it. I wish you had at the beginning digested full meals in a warm room, and excited the humour to exhaust its power upon the surface. This, I believe, must be done at last.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 159, n. 4.

² 'BOSWELL. "Is not the fear of death natural to man?" JOHNSON. "So much so, Sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away

the thoughts of it." *Life*, ii. 93.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 210.

⁴ Mrs. Cumins is mentioned *ante*, ii. 181, and Mrs. Cumyns further on in the present letter.

Miss Seward

Miss Seward has been enquiring after Susan Thrale, of whom she had heard so much from Mrs. Cumyns, as excites her curiosity. If my little dear Perversity continues to be cross, Susy¹ may be my girl too; but I had rather have them both. If Queeney does not write soon she shall have a very reprehensory² letter.

I have here but a dull scene. Poor Lucy's health is very much broken. She takes very little of either food or exercise, and her hearing is very dull, and her utterance confused; but she will have *Watts's Improvement of the Mind*³. Her mental powers are not impaired, and her social virtues seem to increase. She never was so civil to me before.

Mrs. Aston is not, that I perceive, worse than when I left her; but she eats too little, and is somewhat emaciated. She likewise is glad to see me, and I am glad that I have come.

There is little of the sunshine of life, and my own health does not gladden me. But to scatter the gloom—I went last night to the ball⁴, where, you know, I can be happy even without you. On the ball which was very gay, I looked awhile, and went away.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

746.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAREST MADAM,

Lichfield, Nov. 3, 1781.

You very kindly remind me of the dear home which I have

¹ See *ante*, ii. 44, where he writes:—"I was always a Susy when nobody else was a Susy."

² *Reprehensory* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

³ No doubt she had been reading in Johnson's *Life of Watts* the passage where he says:—"Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind*." *Works*, viii. 385.

⁴ Miss Burney recorded the following year at Brighton:—"October 28, 1782. Dr. Johnson accompanied us to a ball, to the universal amazement of all who saw him there; but he said he had found it so dull being quite alone the preceding evening, that he determined upon going with us; "for," said he, "it cannot be worse than being alone."'" *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 161.

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 219.

left;

left¹; but I need none of your aids to recollection, for I am here gasping for breath, and yet better than those whom I came to visit. Mrs. Aston has been for three years a paralytic crawler; but, I think, with her mind unimpaired. She seems to me such as I left her; but she now eats little, and is therefore much emaciated. Her sister thinks her, and she thinks herself, passing fast away.

Lucy has had since my last visit a dreadful illness, from which her physicians declared themselves hopeless of recovering her, and which has shaken the general fabrick, and weakened the powers of life. She is unable or unwilling to move, and is never likely to have more of either strength or spirit².

I am so visibly disordered, that a medical man, who only saw me at church, sent me some pills. To those whom I love here I can give no help, and from those that love me none can I receive. Do you think that I need to be reminded of home and you?

The time of the year is not very favourable to excursions. I thought myself above assistance or obstruction from the seasons³; but find the autumnal blast sharp and nipping, and the fading world an uncomfortable prospect. Yet I may say with Milton, that I do not *abate much of heart or hope*⁴. To what I have done I do not despair of adding something, but *what it shall be I know not*.

I am, Madam,

Most affectionately yours,

SAM: JOHNSON.

747.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Nov. 10, 1781.

Yesterday I came to Ashbourne, and last night I had very

¹ 'Come home,' she had written, 'for 'tis dull living without you.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 216. For his use of the term *home* see *ante*, i. 129.

² She lived till January, 1786. Miss Seward's *Letters*, i. 109.

³ For Johnson's belief that a man could make himself superior to the

seasons see *Life*, i. 332, and for his discovery that he had himself become dependent upon the weather, *ib.* iv. 353, 360.

⁴ 'nor bate a jot

Of heart or hope.'

MILTON. *Sonnet*, No. xxii.

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 221.

little rest. Dr. Taylor lives on milk, and grows every day better, and is not wholly without hope. Every body enquires after you and Queeney; but whatever Burney may think of the celerity of fame, the name of Evelina had never been heard at Lichfield till I brought it. I am afraid my dear townsmen will be mentioned in future days as the last part of this nation that was civilised¹. But the days of darkness are soon to be at an end; the reading society ordered it to be procured this week.

Since I came into this quarter of the earth I have had a very sorry time, and I hope to be better when I come back. The little paddock and plantations here are very bleak. The Bishop of Chester is here now with his father-in-law²; he sent us a message last night, and I intend to visit him.

Most of your Ashbourne friends are well. Mr. Kennedy's daughter has married a shoemaker, and he lives with them, and has left his parsonage.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

748.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Nov. 12, 1781.

I have a mind to look on Queeney as my own dear girl; and if I set her a bad example, I ought to counteract it by good precepts; and he that knows the consequences of any fault is best qualified to tell them. I have through my whole progress of authorship honestly endeavoured to teach the right, though I have not been sufficiently diligent to practise it, and have offered

¹ *Evelina* had been published nearly four years. Nevertheless Johnson had boasted to Boswell that the inhabitants of Lichfield were 'the genteelst in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English.' *Life*, ii. 463. In their ignorance of *Evelina* they were not behind some of the great people in London. See Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 121.

² Beilby Porteus, afterwards Bishop of London. *Life*, iii. 279. He had

married the daughter of 'Brian Hodgson, Esq., of Ashbourne.' Porteus's *Works*, ed. 1811, i. 17. In a curious correspondence in *Notes and Queries* (7th S. v. 241, 294, 330, 494) it is shown that Brian Hodgson, before he retired to Ashbourne, had kept the George Inn at Stamford. By mistake in this correspondence Ashbourne is stated to be in Kent.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 222.

mankind

mankind my opinion as a rule, but never professed my behaviour as an example¹.

I shall be very sorry to lose Mr. —; but why should he so certainly die? * * * * needed not have died if he had tried to live. If Mr. — will drink a great deal of water, the acrimony that corrodes his bowels will be diluted, if the cause be only acrimony; but I suspect dysenteries to be produced by animalcula, which I know not how to kill.

If the medical man did me good, it was by his benevolence; by his pills I never mended². I am, however, rather better than I was.

Dear Mrs. —³, she has the courage becoming an admiral's lady, but courage is no virtue in her cause.

I have been at Lichfield persecuted with solicitations to read a poem; but I sent the authour word, that I would never review the work of an anonymous authour; for why should I put my name in the power of one who will not trust me with his own. With this answer Lucy was satisfied, and I think it may satisfy all whom it may concern⁴.

¹ Lady Macleod (speaking of Cheyne's book on the gout) 'objected that the author does not practise what he teaches. JOHNSON. "I cannot help that, madam. That does not make his book the worse. People are influenced more by what a man says, if his practice is suitable to it,—because they are blockheads. The more intellectual people are, the readier will they attend to what a man tells them. If it is just, they will follow it, be his practice what it will. No man practises so well as he writes. I have, all my life long, been lying till noon, yet I tell all young men, and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good."' *Life*, v. 210.

² *Ante*, ii. 233.

³ Mrs. Byron. *Ante*, ii. 121, n. 2. Lord Byron in his *Epistle to Augusta*

compares himself to his grandfather, the admiral:—"He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore." In a note it is stated that 'Admiral Byron was remarkable for never making a voyage without a tempest. He was known to the sailors by the facetious name of "Foul-weather Jack."' Byron's *Works*, ed. 1854, iv. 202.

⁴ Miss Seward says:—"I cannot imagine what anonymous poem it could be." *Letters*, ii. 44. I think it not unlikely that it was Erasmus Darwin's *Loves of the Plants*, which was published anonymously in 1789. Darwin states in the Advertisement that 'he has withheld it many years from the press, hoping to have rendered it more worthy the acceptance of the public.' He had lived at Lichfield till some time in this year. C. Darwin's *Life of Erasmus Darwin*, p. 27. Edgeworth says that parts of

If

If C—y¹ did nothing for life but add weight to its burden, and darkness to its gloom, he is kindest to those from whom he is furthest. I hope, when I come, not to advance perhaps your pleasures, though even of that I shall be unwilling to despair; but at least not to increase your inconveniencies, which would be a very unsuitable return for all the kindness that you have shewn to,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

749.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAREST MADAM,

Ashbourne, Nov. 14, 1781.

Here is Doctor Taylor, by a resolute adherence to bread and milk, with a better appearance of health than he has had for a long time past³; and here am I, living very temperately, but with very little amendment. But the balance is not perhaps very unequal: he has no pleasure like that which I receive from the kind importunity with which you invite me to return. There is no danger of very long delay. There is nothing in this part of the world that can counteract your attraction.

The hurt in my leg has grown well slowly, according to Hector's prognostick⁴, and seems now to be almost healed: but my nights are very restless, and the days are therefore heavy, and I have not your conversation to cheer them.

I am willing however to hear that there is happiness in the

the poem were shown from time to time to his intimate acquaintance. *Memoirs of Edgeworth*, p. 398. Perhaps it was Darwin who sent Johnson the pills. *Ante*, ii. 233.

Johnson does not use *to review* in the modern sense. He defines it as 'to survey; to overlook; to examine.' Neither does he give a definition of the substantive *review*, in its sense of 'a periodical with critical examinations of books.'

¹ Crutchley. *Ante*, ii. 219, n. 1. Miss Burney, writing in September of this

year, describes him as a man of 'a cold and splenetic turn,' and says that 'he has now left Streatham without much intention to frequently revisit it.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 105. Mrs. Thrale, writing on the same day as Johnson, says that Crutchley had left them on Monday (the 6th). *Ib.* p. 109.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 224.

³ Dr. Taylor lived on a milk diet, which gave him a very disagreeable complexion.' Miss Hawkins's *Memoirs*, i. 164.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 228.

world,

world, and delight to think on the pleasure diffused among the Burneys. I question if any ship upon the ocean goes out attended with more good wishes than that which carries the fate of Burney¹. I love all of that breed whom I can be said to know, and one or two whom I hardly know I love upon credit, and love them because they love each other. Of this consanguineous unanimity I have had never much experience²; but it appears to me one of the great lenitives of life; but it has this deficiency, that it is never found when distress is mutual—He that has less than enough for himself has nothing to spare, and as every man feels only his own necessities, he is apt to think those of others less

¹ Mrs. Thrale had written to Johnson in a letter she dates November 2:—‘Captain Burney has got a fifty-gun ship, and we are all so rejoiced.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 218. Miss Burney had written to her on November 4, in a letter assigned in her *Diary* to 1780, but evidently written in 1781:—‘We had just done tea on Friday, and were sitting down to cards, when we were surprised by an express from London, and it brought a “Whereas we think fit,” from the Admiralty, to appoint Captain Burney to the command of the *Latona*, during the absence of the Hon. Captain Conway. This is one of the best frigates in the navy, of thirty-eight guns. Jem was almost frantic with ecstasy of joy; he sang, laughed, drank to his own success, and danced about the room with Miss Kitty till he put her quite out of breath. His hope is to get out immediately, and have a brush with some of the Dons, Monsieurs, or Mynheers. [We were at war with Spain, France, Holland, and the United States].’ *Mme. D’Arblay’s Diary*, i. 431. Mrs. Thrale in a letter dated November 12 in the *Diary* (ii. 109) quotes, or rather misquotes, Johnson’s letter of November 14. Part of what he had written appears

as her own reflection. What with the original inaccuracy of Miss Burney and Mrs. Thrale, and the superadded inaccuracy of Mme. D’Arblay’s editor and of Mrs. Piozzi as her own editor, it is not easy through their pages to track the truth.

For Johnson’s love of the Burneys see *ante*, ii. 145, *n.* 1. In the beginning of 1783, talking to Miss Burney of the Captain, he said:—‘I should be glad to see him if he were not your brother; but were he a dog, a cat, a rat, a frog, and belonged to you, I must needs be glad to see him.’ *Mme. D’Arblay’s Diary*, ii. 233.

² ‘I who have no sisters nor brothers look with some degree of innocent envy on those who may be said to be born to friends.’ *Life*, i. 324. See also *post*, Letter of May 1, 1783. Nevertheless he had not got on well with his only brother, who complained that ‘he had scarcely used him with common civility.’ *Life*, i. 90, *n.* 3. Carlyle on February 3, 1835, wrote to Emerson, who had lately lost a brother:—‘Had one no brother one could hardly understand what it was to have a Friend; they are the Friends whom Nature chose for us.’ *Corres. of Carlyle and Emerson*, i. 37.

pressing,

pressing, and to accuse them of with-holding what in truth they cannot give. He that has his foot firm upon dry ground may pluck another out of the water; but of those that are all afloat, none has any care but for himself¹.

We do not hear that the deanery is yet given away, and, though nothing is said, I believe much is still thought about it². *Hope travels through*——³

I am, dearest of all dear ladies,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

750.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Ashbourne, Nov. 24, 1781.

I shall leave this place about the beginning of next week, and shall leave every place as fast as I decently can, till I get back to you, whose kindness is one of my great comforts. I am not well, but have a mind every now and then to think myself better, and I now hope to be better under your care.

It was time to send Kam to another master; but I am glad that before he went he beat Hector, for he has really the appearance of a superior species to an animal whose whole power is in his legs, and that against the most defenceless of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Dr. Taylor really grows well, and directs his compliments to be sent. I hope Mr. Perkins will be well too⁵.

But why do you tell me nothing of your own health? Perhaps since the fatal pinch of snuff I may have no care about it. I am glad that you have returned to your meat, for I never expected that abstinence would do you good.

Piozzi, I find, is coming in spite of Miss Harriet's prediction, or second sight, and when *he* comes and *I* come, you will have two about you that love you; and I question if either of us

¹ *Ante*, i. 141.

² See *ante*, ii. 108, for Taylor's longings for another Deanery. The Deanery of Lincoln was filled up on December 22. *Ann. Reg.*, 1781, i. 209.

³ 'Hope travels through, nor quits us when we die.'

POPE. *Essay on Man*, ii. 273.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 226.

⁵ See *Life*, iv. 153.

heartily

heartily care how few more you have¹. But how many soever they may be, I hope you keep your kindness for me, and I have a great mind to have Queeney's kindness too.

Frank's wife² has brought him a wench; but I cannot yet get intelligence of her colour, and therefore have never told him how much depends upon it.

The weather here is chill, and the air damp. I have been only once at the waterfall, which I found doing as it used to do, and came away. I had not you nor Queeney with me.

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

751.

TO EDMUND ALLEN³,

Bolt Court.

DEAR SIR,

Ashbourne, Nov. 26, 1781.

I am weary enough of the country to think of Bolt Court, and purpose to leave Ashbourne, where I now am, in a day or two, and to make my way through Lichfield, Birmingham, and Oxford, with what expedition I decently can, and then we will have a row⁴ and a dinner, and now and then a dish of tea together.

¹ Mrs. Thrale had written:—‘Instead of trying the *Sortes Virgilianæ* [*ante*, ii. 169, *n. a*] for our absent friends, we agreed after dinner to-day to ask little Harriet what they were doing now who used to be our common guests at Streatham. “Dr. Johnson” (says she) “is very rich and wise, Sir Philip is drown’d in the water—and Mr. Piozzi is very sick and lame, poor man!” What a curious way of deciding! all in her little soft voice.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 217. Baretti has the following note on the passage in Johnson’s letter:—‘Impudent b——! How could she venture upon forging this paragraph! Johnson to put himself abreast with such an ignorant dog as Piozzi!’

² The wife of his black servant, Francis Barber. *Life*, i. 237.

³ First published in Croker’s *Boswell*, page 699. ‘Communicated to me by Mr. P. Cunningham,’ writes Mr. Croker, ‘who found also in a pocket-book of Allen’s, memoranda of Johnson’s departure and return. “October 15, 1781, Dr. Johnson set out about 9 A.M. to Oxford, Lichfield, and Ashbourne.” “December 11, 1781, Dr. Johnson returned from Derbyshire.”’

Edmund Allen was Johnson’s landlord and next neighbour in Bolt Court. *Life*, iii. 141.

⁴ I do not understand what this means. Johnson defines the substantive *row* as ‘a rank or file; a number of things ranged in a line.’ He does not recognise the sense of ‘an excursion in a rowing-boat.’ Neither was it likely that in his weak health he would go on the

I doubt

I doubt not but you have been so kind as to send the oysters to Lichfield, and I now beg that you will let Mrs. Desmoulins have a guinea on my account.

My health has been but indifferent, much of the time I have been out, and my journey has not supplied much entertainment.

I shall be at Lichfield, I suppose, long enough to receive a letter, and I desire Mrs. Desmoulins to write immediately what she knows. I wish to be told about Frank's wife and child.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

752.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Lichfield, Dec. 3, 1781.

I am now come back to Lichfield, where I do not intend to stay long enough to receive another letter. I have little to do here but to take leave of Mrs. Aston. I hope not the last leave. But Christians may [say] with more confidence than Sophonisba

Avremo tosto lungo lungo spazio
Per stare assieme, et sarà forse eterno².

My time past heavily at Ashbourne, yet I could not easily get away, though Taylor, I sincerely think, was glad to see me go. I have now learned the inconveniences of a winter campaign; but I hope home will make amends for all my foolish sufferings.

I do not like poor 'Burney's vicarious captainship³.' Surely the tale of Tantalus was made for him. Surely he will be in time a captain like another captain, of a ship like another ship.

You have got Piozzi again, notwithstanding pretty Harriet's dire denunciations⁴. The Italian translation which he has brought,

river so late in the year. I suspect
an error in the copyist.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 228.

² 'Ma tu pur cerca mantenerti in
vita;

Che tosto aremo un lungo lungo
spazio

Di star insieme, e sarà forse
eterno.'

SOFINISEA, *Tragedia di G.
G. Trissino*, ed. 1785,
p. 93.

³ *Ante*, ii. 237, n. 1.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 239, n. 1.

you

you will find no great accession to your library, for the writer seems to understand very little English. When we meet we can compare some passages. Pray contrive a multitude of good things for us to do when we meet. Something that may *hold all together*; though if any thing makes *me* love you more, it is going from you.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

753.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Birmingham, Dec. 8, 1781.

I am come to this place on my way to London and to Streatham. I hope to be in London on Tuesday or Wednesday, and at Streatham on Thursday, by your kind conveyance. I shall have nothing to relate either wonderful or delightful. But remember that you sent me away, and turned me out into the world, and you must take the chance of finding me better or worse. This you may know at present, that my affection for you is not diminished, and my expectation from you is encreased. Do not neglect me, nor relinquish me². Nobody will ever love you better or honour you more than,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

754.

TO JOHN NICHOLS³.

Mr. Johnson being much out of order sent in search of the book, but it is not found. He will, if he is better, look himself diligently to-morrow. He thanks Mr. Nichols for all his favours.

Dr. [December] 26, [1781].

To Mr. Nicols.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 230.

² Johnson's letters henceforth often contain expressions of fear that her

affection for him may lessen.

³ First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 11.

755.

TO MAURITIUS LOWE.

Jan. 1. 1782.

In one of Messrs. Sotheby's Auction Catalogues, the reference to which I have mislaid, Lot 156 is a Letter of Johnson to Mr. Lowe dated Jan. 1, 1782.

756.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], January 5, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 136.

757.

TO DR. LAWRENCE.

[London], January 17, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 137.

758.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST LADY,

January 28, 1782.

I was blooded on Saturday; I think, not copiously enough, but the Doctor would permit no more. I have however his consent to bleed again to-day. Since I left you I have eaten very little, on Friday chiefly broth, on Saturday nothing but some bread in the morning, on Sunday nothing but some bread and three roasted apples. I try to get well and wish to see you; but if I came, I should only cough and cough. Mr. Steevens²,

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 250.

Mrs. Piozzi dates this letter June 28, 1781, but inserts it among those of June 1782. It is clear that *June* is a mistake for *January*, and 1781 for 1782. Johnson mentions the consent of his Doctor 'to bleed again' on the day on which he wrote. He adds also:—'We are all three sick, and poor Levet is gone.' He wrote to Mrs. Strahan on February 4, 1782:—'Of the four inmates [of my house] one has been suddenly snatched away; two are oppressed by very afflictive and dangerous illness; and I tried yesterday to gain some relief by a third bleeding from a disorder

which has for some time distressed me.' *Life*, iv. 140. On July 8 he wrote to Dr. Taylor:—'I came back from Oxford in ten days, and was almost restored to health. . . . My cough is gone.' He went to Oxford in June. *Post*, Letter of June 8. On June 28, therefore, he was in tolerable health. His sick companions were Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins.

² Mr. Steevens was George Steevens who helped him in a new edition of his *Shakespeare*. *Life*, ii. 115. 'He passed,' says Boswell, 'many a social hour with Dr. Johnson during their long acquaintance.' *Ib.* iv. 324.

who

who is with me, says that my hearing is returned. We are here all three sick, and poor Levett is gone.

Do not add to my other distresses any diminution of kindness for,

Madam,
Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

759.

TO MRS. STRAHAN.

[London], February 4, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 140.

760.

TO RECORDER BEATNIFFE¹.

SIR,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, February 14, 1782.

Robert Levett, with whom I have been connected by a friendship of many years, died lately at my house. His death was sudden, and no will has yet been found; I therefore gave notice of his death in the papers, that an heir, if he has any, may appear. He has left very little; but of that little his brother is doubtless heir, and your friend may be perhaps his brother. I have had another application from one who calls himself his brother; and I suppose it is fit that the claimant should give some proofs of his relation. I would gladly know, from the gentleman that thinks himself R. Levett's brother,

In what year, and in what parish, R. Levett was born?

Where or how was he educated?

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 701.

Levett had died suddenly on January 17 of this year. 'He was an old and faithful friend,' Johnson recorded in his *Diary*. 'I have known him from about '46.' *Life*, iv. 137. He wrote to Lucy Porter on March 19:—'I have by advertising found poor Mr. Levett's brothers in Yorkshire, who will take the little he has left; it is but little, yet it will be welcome, for I believe they are of

very low condition.' *Ib.* p. 143.

Hawkins says that Johnson learnt, in reply to his enquiries, that Levett was born at Kirk Ella about five miles from Hull. He had acquired some knowledge of Latin and had a propensity to learning. He had tried more than one calling, and had dabbled in physic. He had been in France and Italy, and had attended the hospitals in Paris. Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 396. See *Life*, i. 243, n. 3, for another account.

What was his early course of life?

What were the marks of his person ; his stature ; the colour of his eyes¹?

Was he marked by the small-pox?

Had he any impediment in his speech?

What relations had he, and how many are now living?

His answer to these questions will show whether he knew him ; and he may then proceed to show that he is his brother.

He may be sure, that nothing shall be hastily wasted or removed. I have not looked into his boxes, but transferred that business to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, of character above suspicion.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To Mr. Beatniffe, Recorder of Hull.

761.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAREST LADY,

[Bolt Court], Feb. 16, 1782.

I am better, but not yet well ; but hope springs eternal³.
—As soon as I can think myself not troublesome, you may be sure of seeing me, for such a place to visit nobody ever had. Dearest Madam, do not think me worse than I am ; be sure at least, that whatever happens to me, I am with all the regard that admiration of excellence and gratitude for kindness can excite,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ 'His person was middle-sized and thin ; his visage swarthy, adust, and corrugated. When in dishabille he might have been mistaken for an alchemist, whose complexion had been hurt by the fumes of the crucible, and whose clothes had suffered from the sparks of the furnace.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 102. Haw-

kins adds 'a dictum of Johnson respecting him—that his external appearance and behaviour were such that he disgusted the rich and terrified the poor.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 400.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 231.

³ 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast.'

Essay on Man, i. 95.

762.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

Feb. 17, 1782.

Sure such letters would make any man well². I will let them have their full operation upon me; but while I write I am not without a cough. I can however keep it quiet by diacodium, and am in hope that with all other disturbances it will go away, and permit me to enjoy the happiness of being,

Madam, your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

763.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAREST MADAM,

Bolt-court, Feb. 21, 1782.

I certainly grow better. I lay this morning with such success, that I called before I rose for dry linen. I believe I have had a crisis.

Last night called Sir Richard Jebb⁴; and many people call or send: I am not neglected nor forgotten. But let me be always sure of your kindness. I hope to try again this week whether your house is yet so cold, for to be away from you, if I did not think our separation likely to be short, how could I endure?

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 235.

² Mrs. Piozzi inserts a letter of hers to him dated February 16 in which she says:—‘I told Dr. Lawrence that the *Gravedo* [*ante*, ii. 229, *n.* 5] of which you complain should be kept from *increasing long in this case*, and as he is as good a grammarian as he is a physician I hope he will take the hint.’ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 233. She wrote to Miss Burney this same month that she had found Dr. Lawrence with Dr. Johnson:—‘I put my nose into the old man’s wig [Dr. Lawrence’s], and shouted; but got none except melancholy answers—so melancholy that I was forced to crack jokes for fear of crying. “He

complains of a general *gravedo*,” cries the Doctor; “but he speaks too good Latin for us.” “Do you take care, at least, that it does not increase long,” quoth I. (The word *gravedo* makes *gravedinis*, and is therefore said to increase long in the genitive case.) I thought this a good, stupid, scholarlike pun, and Johnson seemed to like that Lawrence was pleased.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, ii. 123. Johnson, it is clear, heard the pun; it seems likely therefore that her letter to him was a fabrication, for she would not have told him what he had so lately heard from her.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 235.⁴ The physician. *Ante*, ii. 148.

You are a dear dear lady, and your kind attention is a great part of what life affords to,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

764.

TO EDMOND MALONE.

[London], February 27, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 141.

765.

TO MRS. PORTER.

London, March 2, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 142.

766.

TO EDMOND MALONE.

[London], March 7, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 141.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of May 10, 1875, the date is given as March 2. The Letter (Lot 98) was sold for £6 6s.

767.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST OF ALL DEAR LADIES,

March 14, 1782.

That Povilleri should write these verses is impossible. I am angry at Sastres².

Seven ounces! Why I sent a letter to Dr. Lawrence, who is ten times more *timorsome* than is your Jebb, and he came and stood by while one vein was opened with too small an orifice, and bled eight ounces and stopped. Then another vein was opened, which ran eight more. And here am I sixteen ounces lighter, for I have had no dinner³.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 236.

² An Italian master. See *post*, Letter of August 21, 1784.

³ Johnson recorded in his *Diary* on March 18:—'Having been from the middle of January distressed by a cold which made my respiration very laborious, and from which I was but little relieved by being

blooded three times; having tried to ease the oppression of my breast by frequent opiates, which kept me waking in the night and drowsy the next day, and subjected me to the tyranny of vain imaginations; having to all this added frequent catharticks, sometimes with mercury, I at last persuaded Dr. Lawrence on Thurs-

I think

I think the loss of blood has done no harm ; whether it has done good, time will tell. I am glad that I do not sink without resistance ¹.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

768.

TO MRS. PORTER.

Bolt Court, March 19, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 142.

769.

TO MRS. ASTON.

London, March 19, 1782.

On March 19, Johnson recorded in his Diary :—‘ I wrote to Aston.’ *Prayers and Meditations*, page 206.

770.

TO CAPTAIN LANGTON.

Bolt Court, March 20, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 145.

771.

TO EDMUND HECTOR.

London, March 21, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 146.

772.

TO EDMUND HECTOR.

Undated. Published in the *Life*, iv. 147.

773.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR.

London, March 22, 1782.

On March 22 of this year, Johnson recorded in his *Diary* :—‘ I wrote to Taylor about the pot.’ *Prayers and Meditations*, page 208.

For the silver coffee-pot see *post*, p. 262.

day, March 14, to let me bleed more copiously. Sixteen ounces were taken away, and from that time my breath has been free, and my breast easy.’ *Pr. and Med.*, p. 203.

Timorsome was perhaps a catch-

word in the Streatham set. Johnson on his death-bed reproached Heberden with being ‘timidorum timidissimus.’ *Life*, iv. 399, n. 6.

¹ See *ante*, i. 378, n. 3.

To

774.

TO WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON.

March 22, 1782.

On March 22, 1782, Johnson recorded in his *Diary*:—‘I wrote to Hamilton about the *Fædera*.’ *Prayers and Meditations*, page 208.

The *Fædera* was, no doubt, Rymer’s work.

775.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, March 28, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 148.

776.

TO MRS. GASTRELL AND MRS. ASTON¹.

DEAREST LADIES,

The tenderness expressed in your kind letter makes me think it necessary to tell you that they who are pleased to wish me well, need not be any longer particularly solicitous about me. I prevailed on my Physician to bleed me very copiously, almost against his inclination. However he kept his finger on the pulse of the other hand, and, finding that I bore it well, let the vein run on. From that time I have mended, and hope I am now well. I went yesterday to Church without inconvenience², and hope to go tomorrow.

Here are great changes in the great world, but I cannot tell you more than you will find in the papers. The Men are got in,

¹ First published in Croker’s *Boswell*, page 706. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

² In Johnson’s *Diary* there are the following entries at this date:—‘March 28, Thursday. The weather which now begins to be warm gives me great help. I have hardly been at church this year; certainly not since the 15th of January. My cough and difficulty of breathing would not permit it. This is the day on which in 1752 dear Tetty died. I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows

that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me. . . . We were married almost seventeen years, and have now been parted thirty. . . . 29, Good Friday. After a night of great disturbance and solicitude, such as I do not remember, I rose, drank tea, but without eating, and went to church. I was very composed. . . . A kind letter from Gastrel [Mrs. Gastrell].’ During the whole of the day he ate nothing but some buns at tea. The next day he records:—‘I was faint; dined on herrings and potatoes.’ *Pr. and Med.*, p. 209.

whom

whom I have endeavoured to keep out, but I hope they will do better than their predecessors; it will not be easy to do worse¹.

Spring seems now to approach, and I feel its benefit, which I hope will extend to dear Mrs. Aston.

When Dr. Falconer² saw me, I was at home only by accident, for I lived much with Mrs. Thrale and had all the care from her that she could take, or that could be taken. But I have never been ill enough to want attendance, my disorder has been rather tedious than violent, rather irksome than painful. He needed not have made such a tragical representation.

I am now well enough to flatter myself with some hope of pleasure from the Summer. How happy would it be if we could see one another, and be all tolerably well. Let us pray for one another.

I am, dearest Ladies,

Your most obliged, and
most humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

March 30, 1782.

London, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.

777.

TO MISS REYNOLDS³.

DEAREST MADAM,

April 8, 1782.

Your work⁴ is full of very penetrating meditation, and very forcible sentiments. I read it with a full perception of the sublime, with wonder and terror; but I cannot think of any profit from it; it seems not born to be popular.

Your system of the mental fabric is exceedingly obscure, and, without more attention than will be willingly bestowed, is unintelligible. The plans of Burnaby⁵ will be more safely⁶ understood,

¹ On March 20 Johnson recorded: —'The Ministry is dissolved. I prayed with Francis and gave thanks.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 207. On the afternoon of that day Lord North announced in the House of Commons 'that his Majesty's Ministers were no more.' *Parl. Hist.* xxii. 1215. The Rockingham Ministry took their place.

² Miss Seward mentions a Dr.

Falconer of Bath. Seward's *Letters*, v. 222.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 706.

⁴ For other works which Miss Reynolds had submitted to Johnson, see *ante*, pp. 180, 223.

⁵ Burnaby, I conjecture, was a character in the book.

⁶ Perhaps Johnson wrote *easily*.

and are often charming. I was delighted with the different bounty of different ages.

I would make it produce something if I could, but I have indeed no hope. If a bookseller would buy it at all, as it must be published without a name, he would give nothing for it worth your acceptance.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

778.

MADAM, TO MRS. THRALE¹. April [24 or 25, 1782].

I have been very much out of order since you sent me away; but why should I tell you, who do not care, nor desire to know? I dined with Mr. Paradise on Monday, with the Bishop of St. Asaph yesterday, with the Bishop of Chester² I dine to-day, and with the Academy on Saturday³, with Mr. Hoole on Monday, and with Mrs. Garrick on Thursday the 2d of May⁴, and then—what care you? *what then?*

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 237.

Mrs. Piozzi gives no other date to this letter than April. The Academy dinner was on Saturday, April 27. Johnson did not write on Friday, or he would have said:—‘I dine with the Academy to-morrow.’ Neither did he write on Tuesday, as he was going, he said, on the day he wrote to dine out for the third time that week; the first time was Monday. He wrote therefore either on Wednesday the 24th or Thursday the 25th.

² The Bishop of St. Asaph was Dr. Shipley, and the Bishop of Chester Dr. Porteus. Hannah More was at the Bishop of Chester’s dinner. ‘Johnson was there,’ she writes, ‘and the Bishop was very desirous to draw him out, as he wished to show him off to some of the company who had never seen him. He begged me to sit next him at dinner, and to devote myself to making him talk. To this end I consented to talk more

than became me, and our stratagem succeeded. . . . He was very good-humoured and gay. One of the company happened to say a word about poetry. “Hush, hush,” said he, “it is dangerous to say a word of poetry before her; it is talking of the art of war before Hannibal.” He continued his jokes, and lamented that I had not married Chatterton, that posterity might have seen a propagation of poets.’ Hannah More’s *Memoirs*, i. 251.

³ In the Exhibition of this year there were fifteen of Sir Joshua’s pictures. In the *Academy Archives* there is the following entry about the dinner this year:—‘That Mr. Fitz-Walter dress the dinner at the Academy for £42. The wines to be claret, Madeira, port and Caracavalla (Calcavella).’ Leslie and Taylor’s *Reynolds*, ii. 361.

⁴ ‘I have found,’ he had written a few weeks earlier, ‘the world willing

The

The news run, that we have taken seventeen French transports¹—that Langton's lady is lying down with her eighth child, all alive—and Mrs. Carter's Miss Sharpe is going to marry a schoolmaster sixty-two years old².

Do not let Mr. Piozzi nor any body else put me quite out of your head³, and do not think that any body will love you like

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

779.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAREST MADAM,

April 30, 1782.

I have had a fresh cold and been very poorly⁵. But I was yesterday at Mr. Hoole's, where were Miss Reynolds and many others. I am going to the club.

Since Mrs. Garrick's invitation I have a letter from Miss Moore⁶, to engage me for the evening. I have an appointment

enough to caress me, if my health had invited me to be in much company.' *Life*, iv. 147.

¹ 'April 27. Letters from Admiral Barrington confirm the capture of the Pegasus, and four of the French transports.' *Ann. Reg.* 1782, i. 206.

² Mrs. Carter had two or three times 'made long journeys with Miss Sharpe, a single lady of large fortune, who afterwards married the Rev. Osmund Beauvoir, D.D.' Mrs. Carter's *Memoirs*, i. 457. Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney on April 24 :— 'Miss Sharp will marry the old schoolmaster too! Did you ever hear Baretti talk of the Tromba Marino man that the girl in Venice would absolutely marry for the comfort of combing his beard?' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 138.

³ 'These words again are of her own fabrication.' BARETTI.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 238.

⁵ Johnson wrote to Lawrence on the next :—'NOVUM *frigus*, nova

tussis, nova *spirandi difficultas*, novam sanguinis missionem suadent, quam tamen te inconsulto nolim fieri.' *Life*, iv. 143. The cold weather had returned. Horace Walpole wrote on May 5 :—'It is the depth of winter. Never was there such a spring! After deluges of rain we have had an east wind that has half-starved London, as a fleet of colliers cannot get in. Coals were sold yesterday at seven guineas a chaldron; nor is there an entire leaf yet on any tree.' *Letters*, viii. 216. The chaldron, according to Johnson's *Dictionary*, should weigh 2000 pounds—240 pounds less than a ton. Horace Walpole's numbers, as he would have himself allowed, are always to be received with doubt.

⁶ Hannah More, who when she visited London, generally lived at the Garricks'. She has no record of this evening, though very probably it was then that Johnson told her 'he hated to hear people whine to

to Miss Monkton¹, and another with Lady Sheffield at Mrs. Way's².

Two days ago Mr. Cumberland had his third night, which, after all expences, put into his own pocket five pounds. He has lost his plume³.

Mrs. S—— refused to sing, at the Duchess of Devonshire's request, a song to the Prince of Wales⁴. They pay for the ——⁵ neither principal nor interest; and poor Garrick's funeral

about metaphysical distresses, when there was so much want and hunger in the world. I told him,' she continues, 'I supposed then he never wept at any tragedy but *Jane Shore*, who had died for want of a loaf. He called me a saucy girl [she was thirty-seven years old], but did not deny the inference.' Hannah More's *Memoirs*, i. 249. Miss Burney describes Mrs. Garrick as receiving her 'with a politeness and sweetness of manners inseparable from her.' *Early Diary of Fanny Burney*, i. 168.

¹ Miss Monckton. *Ante*, ii. 151, n. 7.

² Lady Sheffield was the wife of Gibbon's friend, Colonel Holroyd, first Baron Sheffield. Gibbon described her on her death as 'an amiable and affectionate friend, whom I had known and loved above three and twenty years, and whom I often styled by the endearing name of sister.' *Misc. Works*, i. 398. Mrs. Way, Johnson describes as her relation. *Post*, Letter of October 6, 1783. Lady Sheffield was a Miss Way. Burke's *Peerage*, article Earl of Sheffield. Gibbon wrote to Colonel Holroyd in 1772:—'As Mr. Way has probably unladen all the politics, and Mrs. Way all the scandal of the town, I shall for the present only satisfy myself with the needful.' *Misc. Works*, ii. 79.

³ Cumberland had brought out at Covent Garden on April 20 his comedy of *The Wallouons*. It was acted

six nights. Baker's *Biog. Dram.* iii. 389. In his *Memoirs*, ii. 193, he passes over its reception. The author for a long time had had for his pay the profit of the third night. Afterwards a second night and later on a third night was added. Johnson's *Works*, vii. 271. Johnson's *Irene*, ran, says Boswell, nine nights; 'so that he had his three nights' profits.' *Life*, i. 198. Murphy says that 'Garrick's play-house (Drury Lane) for some years held no more than £220, during that period the charge on the author's night was sixty guineas. In 1762 the house was enlarged to a receipt of £335; the deduction from the author's benefit was raised to seventy guineas.' *Life of Garrick*, p. 362.

⁴ Mrs. S—— is Mrs. Sheridan, the wife of R. B. Sheridan. See *Life*, ii. 369, where in 1775 Johnson praised Sheridan's 'determination that she should no longer sing in public.' I cannot find in Moore's *Life of Sheridan* any mention of the refusal to sing before the Prince.

⁵ Theatre. In 1776 Sheridan with two others bought Garrick's moiety of the patent of Drury Lane Theatre for £35,000; in 1778 he made a further purchase of the property. 'By what spell all these thousands were conjured up,' writes Moore, 'it would be difficult accurately to ascertain. That happy art of putting the future in pawn for the supply of the present must have been the chief expences

expences are yet unpaid, though the undertaker is broken¹. Could you have a better purveyor for a little scandal? But I wish I was at Streatham. I beg Miss to come early, and I may perhaps reward you with more mischief.

I am, dearest and dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

780.

MADAM,

TO MRS. THRALE².

May 8, 1782.

Yesterday I was all so bonny, as who but me? At night my cough drove me to diacodium, and this morning I suspect that diacodium will drive me to sleep in the chair. Breath however is better, and I shall try to escape the other bleeding³, for I am of the chymical sect, which holds phlebotomy in abhorrence⁴.

But it is not plenty nor diminution of blood that can make me more or less,

My dearest dear Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

I send my compliments to my dear Queeney.

781.

TO THE REVEREND MR. —, at Bath.

[London], May 15, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 150.

resource of Mr. Sheridan in all these later purchases.' Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ed. 1825, i. 180, 191, 263-4.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 230, n. 3.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 240.

³ He had the first bleeding no doubt as the result of his Latin letter to Lawrence. *Ante*, ii. 251, n. 5.

⁴ In Burton's *Anatomy*, ed. 1660,

p. 387, an account is given of the strife between the practisers of chymical physic and the Galenists, though phlebotomy is not mentioned there. Johnson, in spite of his abhorrence, had by March 20 lost 'about fifty ounces of blood' (*Life*, iv. 146), and was not even then satisfied. He should have consulted Dr. Sangrado.

To

782.

TO GEORGE KEARSLEY.

[London], May 20, 1782. Published in the *Life*, i. 214, n. 1.

783.

To —.

May 27, 1782.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of May 10, 1875, Lot No. 99 is a Letter of Dr. Johnson, two pages quarto, dated May 27, 1782. 'He mentions the necessity of rectifying the passage about Death; concludes by saying, "I have been for a long time very ill."'

The Letter was sold for £3 5s.

A clergyman at Bath had drawn Johnson's attention to a passage in a selection from his writings, entitled *The Beauties of Johnson*, which was supposed by some readers to recommend suicide. Johnson replied in a letter dated May 15, published in the *Life*, iv. 150. On May 20 he wrote to George Kearsley the publisher of the book, asking him to call on him with a copy. *Ib.* i. 214, n. 1. On May 29 he had an announcement inserted in the *Morning Chronicle* showing that it was not suicide but exercise which he had recommended.

784.

SIR,

To —¹.

I have collected the dates of our business. I shall be at home to-morrow morning. I am not well, but hope that you are better. Please to make compliments to all the Company of Wednesday.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most, &c.,

May 28, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

785.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, June 3, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 151.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. J. C. Brooks, of 14 Loraine Place, Newcastle.

This Letter was perhaps written to Mr. Perkins, with whom Johnson,

as one of Mr. Thrale's executors, often had business, and who two months later had to take a very long journey in the hope of recovering his health. *Life*, iv. 153.

TO

786.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, June 4, 1782.

Wisely was it said by him who said it first, that this world is all ups and downs. You know, dearest Lady, that when I prest your hand at parting I was rather down. When I came hither, I ate my dinner well, but was so harassed by the cough, that Mr. Strahan said, it was an extremity which he could not have believed without the sensible and true avouch of his own observation². I was indeed almost sinking under it, when Mrs. Williams happened to cry out that such a cough should be stilled by opium or any means. I took yesterday half an ounce of bark, and knew not whether opium would counteract it, but remembering no prohibition in the medical books, and knowing that to quiet the cough with opium was one of Lawrence's last orders, I took two grains, which gave me not sleep indeed, but rest, and that rest has given me strength and courage.

This morning to my bed-side came dear Sir Richard³. I told him of the opium, and he approved it, and told me, if I went to Oxford, which he rather advised, that I should strengthen the constitution by the bark, tame the cough with opium, keep the body open, and support myself by liberal nutriment.

As to the journey I know not that it will be necessary, *desine mollium tandem querularum*⁴.—This day I dined upon skate, pudding, goose, and your asparagus, and could have eaten more, but was prudent.

Pray for me, dear Madam; I hope the tide has turned. The change that I feel is more than I durst have hoped, or than I thought possible; but there has yet not passed a whole day,

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 241.

³ Sir Richard Jebb.

² 'Before my God, I might not this believe

⁴ *querelatum*. HORACE, 2 *Odes*, ix. 17.

Without the sensible and true
avouch
Of mine own eyes.'

'At length these weak complaints
give o'er.'

Hamlet, Act i. sc. 1.

FRANCIS.

and

and I may rejoice perhaps too soon. Come and see me, and when you think best, upon due consideration, take me away.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

787.

MADAM,

TO MRS. [MISS] PROWSE¹.

I have thus long omitted the acknowledgement [*sic*] of your letter and bill—not by levity or negligence but under the pressure of illness [*sic*] long continued and very distressful [*sic*]. I am now better, but yet so far from health that I have been purposing to seek relief from change of air by a journey to Oxford.

Your health, Madam, I hope allows you the full enjoyment of this blooming season². I have yet been able to derive little pleasure from verdure or from fragrance.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt Court, Fleet Street.

SAM: JOHNSON.

June 4, 1782.

788.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Saturday, June 8, 1782.

Perhaps some of your people may call to-morrow. I have

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. v. 442. Copied by me from a copy in the possession of the Rev. Edward B. Edgell, of Bromham Rectory, Chippenham. On the copy is written:—‘The original in the possession of John Sheppard, Esqre, Frome, given to him by my father, the Rev. Edward Edgell, of East Hill, near Frome. This letter is curious as containing three words which vary from Dr. Johnson’s own Dictionary’s spelling—*acknow-*

legement, distressful, and illness. It is his receipt to Mrs. Prowse of Berkeley for Miss Hearne’s £10.’

For Miss Hearne see *ante*, ii. 193, n. 4.

² Horace Walpole wrote the same day:—‘Stonhewer has been very ill of the influenza, and Palgrave a little, but we have had two dry days after fifty-three of rain, and begin to wear our rainbow again.’ *Letters*, viii. 229.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 251. This letter is wrongly dated by Mrs. Piozzi, July 8.

this

this day taken a passage¹ to Oxford for Monday. Not to frisk as you express it with very unfeeling irony, but to catch at the hopes of better health. The change of place may do something. To leave the house where so much has been suffered affords some pleasure. When I write to you write to me again, and let me have the pleasure of knowing that I am still considered as

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

789.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

Oxford, June 11, 1782.

Yesterday I came to Oxford without fatigue or inconvenience. I read in the coach before dinner³. I dined moderately, and slept well; but find my breath not free this morning.

Dr. Edwards, to whom I wrote word of my purpose to come, has defeated his own kindness by its excess. He has gone out of his own rooms for my reception⁴, and therefore I cannot

¹ Johnson does not in his *Dictionary* give a definition of *passage* which suits the sense in which he here uses it. *Passenger*, however, he defines as 'one who hires in any vehicle the liberty of travelling.'

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 261. This letter is wrongly dated by Mrs. Piozzi, June 11, 1783. It belongs without any doubt to June, 1782.

³ It was at a coach-dinner on the road to Oxford that two years later he scolded the waiter for the roast mutton, saying:—'It is as bad as bad can be; it is ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-drest.' *Life*, iv. 284.

⁴ Hannah More wrote this same month:—'I am engaged to dine on my return to Oxford with the learned Dr. Edwards of Jesus College, to meet Dr. Johnson, Thomas Warton, and whatever else is most learned and famous in this University.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 262. See *post*, Letter of May 31, 1784,

where Johnson speaks of Edwards as 'my convivial friend.' It is strange that while in the Hebrides Johnson's room is shown in some of the houses which he visited, of this visit of his to Jesus College no tradition is preserved. In fact it is, I believe, a discovery of mine that he resided there. Where Johnson was lodged we cannot be sure. His host was Vice-Principal, and probably I am told in that capacity occupied the rooms in the south-western corner of the outer quadrangle, the first floor right. Johnson's fame in Oxford at this time is shown by an anecdote which I have from the Master of Balliol College. Boswell mentions Dr. Wall, a physician at Oxford, who drank tea with Johnson in 1784. *Life*, iv. 292. His widow was alive when the Master entered Balliol. She used to narrate that she had seen a double line of people waiting to see Dr. Johnson enter the Cathedral.

decently stay long, unless I can change my abode, which it will not be very easy to do: nor do I know what attractions I shall find here. Here is Miss Moore¹ at Dr. Adams's, with whom I shall dine to-morrow. Of my adventures and observations I shall inform you, and beg you to write to me at Mr. Parker's, bookseller².

I hope Queeney has got rid of her influenza, and that you escape it. If I had Queeney here, how would I shew her all the places³. I hope, however, I shall not want company in my stay here.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

790.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

Oxford, June 12, 1782.

My letter was perhaps peevish, but it was not unkind. I should have cared little about a wanton expression, if there had been no kindness⁵.

I find no particular salubrity in this air⁶, my respiration is very laborious; my appetite is good, and my sleep commonly long and quiet; but a very little motion disables me.

I dine to-day with Dr. Adams⁷, and to-morrow with Dr.

¹ Hannah More.

² *Ante*, ii. 228.

³ Mrs. Thrale, in the reply which she publishes to this letter, says:— 'It would have been a fine advantage indeed could Miss Thrale have seen Oxford now in your company; when we enjoyed it she was too young to profit of the circumstance.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 267. Unfortunately for her credit she dates her letter June 15, 1783, and in it refers to a letter of Johnson's written two days earlier. In June 1783 Johnson did not visit Oxford. Having by mistake inserted Johnson's letter in the text in the wrong year she fabricates her answer to include it and one written twelve months and two days later.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 243.

⁵ Johnson, I conjecture, wrote 'any kindness.' The 'wanton expression' was 'frisk.' *Ante*, ii. 257.

⁶ Ayliffe in his *State of the University of Oxford* (1723, i. 240) speaks of 'the sweetness and commodiousness of the situation of Oxford.' In *A Pocket Companion for Oxford* (1762, p. 3), we read that 'the soil is dry, being on a fine gravel, which renders it as healthful and pleasant a spot as any in the Kingdom.'

⁷ 'Dr. Adams,' writes Hannah More, 'had contrived a very pretty piece of gallantry. After dinner, Johnson begged to conduct me to see the College; he would let no one

Wetherel.

Wetherel¹. Yesterday Dr. Edwards invited some men from Exeter college, whom I liked very well. These variations of company help the mind, though they cannot do much for the body. But the body receives some help from a cheerful mind.

Keep up some kindness for me ; when I am with you again, I hope to be less burdensome, by being less sick².

I am, dearest Lady,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

791.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Oxford, June 13, 1782.

Yesterday a little physick drove away a great part of my cough, but I am still very much obstructed in my respiration, and so soon tired with walking, that I have hardly ventured one unnecessary step. Of my long illness much more than this does not remain, but this is very burthensome. I sleep pretty well, and have appetite enough, but I cheat it with fish.

Yesterday I dined at Dr. Adams's with Miss More, and other personages of eminence. To-day I am going to Dr. Wetherel ; and thus day goes after day, not wholly without amusement.

show it me but himself. "This was my room ; this Shenstone's." Then, after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, "In short," said he, "we were a nest of singing-birds." When we came into the common-room, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, hung up that very morning, with this motto:—*And is not Johnson ours, himself a host ?* Under which stared you in the face—*From Miss More's "Sensibility."* This little incident amused us : but, alas ! Johnson looks very ill indeed—spiritless and wan. However, he made an effort to be cheerful.¹ H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 261. Dr. Adams, writing about the print, says that Miss Adams told Johnson that he ought to give them his picture

to hang in the Hall. 'His answer was that he had no right to be placed among the Founders and Benefactors of the College in the Hall ; that the most he could aspire to would be a place in the Lodgings [the Master's house], if the Master could find room for his picture there.' Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s *Auct. Catal.*, November 27, 1889, Lot 90. The late Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode a few years ago gave the College a fine portrait of Johnson by Reynolds.

¹ Dr. Wetherell was Master of University College.

² 'Dr. Johnson,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'required less attendance, sick or well, than ever I saw any human creature.' Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 275.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 244.

I think not to stay here long. Till I am better it is not prudent to sit long in the libraries, for the weather is yet so cold, that in the penury of fuel, for which we think ourselves very unhappy, I have yet met with none so frugal as to sit without fire¹.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Poor Davis² complained that he had not received his money for Boyle.

792.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

Oxford, June 17, 1782.

I have found no sudden alteration or amendment, but I am grown better by degrees. My cough is not now very troublesome to myself, nor I hope to others. My breath is still short and encumbered; I do not sleep well, but I lie easy. By change of place, succession of company, and necessity of talking, much of the terror that had seized me seems to be dispelled.

Oxford has done, I think, what for the present it can do, and I am going slyly to take a place in the coach for Wednesday, and you or my sweet Queeney will fetch me on Thursday, and see what you can make of me.

To-day I am going to dine with Dr. Wheeler⁴, and to-morrow Dr. Edwards has invited Miss Adams and Miss More. Yesterday I went with Dr. Edwards to his living⁵. He has really done

¹ For 'the penury of fuel' at London, see *ante*, ii. 251, *n.* 5. Horace Walpole writing on the same day as Johnson, says:—'You had better put an erratum at the end of your Almanac, for *June* read *January*.' *Letters*, viii. 232.

² Most likely Tom Davies, the bankrupt bookseller. *Life*, iii. 223.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 249.

⁴ Johnson, after Wheeler's death, spoke of him as 'the man with whom I most delighted to converse' and as 'my learned friend.' *Post*, Letters of

August 20, 1783, and May 31, 1784. His talk no doubt was full of variety, for he had been Fellow of Magdalen College, Professor of Poetry, Professor of Natural Philosophy, and Regius Professor of Divinity, as well as Canon of Christ Church and Prebendary of St. Paul's (*Alumni Oxonienses*). Many of these offices he held at the same time. He died July 22, 1783.

⁵ He was Rector of Besselsleigh, Berkshire, a small village about five miles from Oxford. It was on a
all

all that he could do for my relief or entertainment, and really drives me away by doing too much¹.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

When I come back to retirement, it will be great charity in you to let me come back to something else.

793.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².

DEAR SIR,

You are doubtless impatient to know the present state of the court. Dr. Hunter³, whom I take to have very good intelligence, has just left me, and from him I learn only that all is yet uncertainty and confusion.

Fox, you know, has resigned, Burke's dismissal is expected. I was particularly told that the Cavendishes were expected to be left out in the new settlement⁴. The Doctor spoke, however,

Sunday that he took Johnson to his living. No doubt they returned the same evening. The old manor-house was then standing which had belonged to Lenthall, the Speaker. Johnson was no doubt gravely told that 'Cromwell, who was a frequent visitor here, usually concealed himself in a room to which the only access was by a chair let down and drawn up with pulleys.' Lewis's *Topog. Dict. of England*, article *Besselsleigh*.

¹ By the kindness of my friend the Rev. Llewelyn Thomas, Vice-Principal of Jesus College, I am able to give further proof of the hospitality of his predecessor. The Battel-book for 1784 shows that the average battels or weekly bills were not much over 10s. Johnson was there part of two weeks. In the week beginning June 7 the Vice-Principal's battels rose to £2 16s. 3d., and in the next week to £4 1s. In the second week

many of the Fellows and Scholars had unusually high battels—one over £3—so that there seems to have been some general feasting. Well did Johnson call Edwards 'my convivial friend.'

² First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 461.

The Prime-Minister, the Marquis of Rockingham, died on July 1; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Fox, one of the Secretaries of State, resigned on the 5th; Burke's resignation as Paymaster-General followed almost immediately. The Earl of Shelburne succeeded Rockingham. *Ann. Reg.*, 1782, i. 182, 213.

³ Dr. William Hunter. *Life*, iv. 220. See Appendix B.

⁴ Taylor, forty years earlier, had been hoping for preferment through the Duke of Devonshire, the head of the Cavendishes. *Ante*, i. 12, n. 1. His hopes were once more baffled by
with

with very little confidence, nor do I believe that those who are now busy in the contest can judge of the event. I did not think Rockingham of such importance as that his death should have had such extensive consequences.

Have you settle[d] about the silver coffeepot¹? is it mine or Mrs. Fletcher's? I am yet afraid of liking it too well.

If there is any thing that I can do for Miss Colliers², let me know. But now you have so kindly engaged in it, I am willing to set myself at ease.

When you went away, I did not expect so long absence. If you are engaged in any political business, I suppose your operations are at present suspended, as is, I believe, the whole political movement. These are not pleasant times³.

I came back from Oxford in ten days and was almost restored to health. My breath is not quite free, but my cough is gone.

I am, Sir,

Your most, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, July 8, 1782.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

[Redirected, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire⁴.]

794.

TO MISS LAWRENCE.

[London], July 22, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 144, n. 3.

795.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR⁵.

I do not hear that the Cavendishes are likely to find their [way] soon into publick offices, but I do not doubt of the Duke's ability to procure the exchange for which he has stipulated, and which is now not so much a favour as a contract.

his friends going out of power on Rockingham's death. See the next letter.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 247.

² Miss Collier is mentioned, *post*, pp. 269, 270.

³ See *post*, p. 264, where Johnson

says of England:—'We seem to be sinking.'

⁴ Taylor was Rector of Market Bosworth. *Ante*, i. 13, n. 6.

⁵ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 462.

Your

Your reason for the exchange I do not fully comprehend, but I conceive myself a Gainer by it, because, I think, you must be more in London.

Mr. Burke's family is computed to have lost by this revolution twelve thousand a year¹. What a rise, and what a fall! Shelburne speaks of him in private with great malignity².

I have heard no more from the Miss Colliers³. Now you have engaged on their side, I am less solicitous about them. Be on their side as much as you can, for you know they are friendless.

Sir Robert Chambers slipped this session through the fingers of revocation, but I am in doubt of his continuance. Shelburne seems to be his enemy. Mrs. Thrale says they will do him no harm. She perhaps thinks there is no harm without hanging. The mere act of recall strips him of eight thousand a year⁴.

I am not very well, but much better than when we parted, and I hope that milk and summer together are improving you, and strengthening you against the attack of winter.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, July 22, 1782.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor at Market Bosworth, Leicestershire.

¹ Burke, in a letter dated April 24 of this year, says:—'The office is to be £4,000 certain. Young Richard [his son] is the deputy, with a salary of £500.... Something considerable is also to be secured for the life of young Richard, to be a security for him and his mother.... My brother has before him the option of the Secretaryship of the Treasury, with precedence in the office.' Burke's *Correspondence*, ii. 483. In the short time in which he was in office, by his reform, '£47,000 per annum was saved to the public, of which sum £25,300 were the usual and avowed perquisites of the Paymaster.' Prior's *Burke*, ed. 1872, p. 218.

² 'Johnson was at a certain period of his life a good deal with the Earl

of Shelburne.' *Life*, iv. 191. He knew also his brother, Mr. Fitzmaurice. *Ante*, ii. 81. Burke spoke of Shelburne with great violence. In 1783 he described him in a letter to a private friend as 'this wicked man, and no less weak and stupid than false and hypocritical.' Payne's *Select Works of Burke*, vol. i. p. xvi.

³ Their mother as is shown, *post*, by the Letter of January 16, 1783, had married a Mr. Flint. She had brought him, Johnson thought, about £200 a year. She was dead, and he apparently was attempting to keep the property to himself.

⁴ Chambers, in 1773, had been appointed second Judge in the Supreme Court of Bombay with £6,000 a year. He had been one of Nuncomar's

796.

TO MR. PERKINS.

[London], July 28, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 153.

797.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR.

The refusal of Mr. Dixie², if it be peremptory and final, puts an end to all projects of exchange. You may, however, if your friends get into power, obtain preferment. But do not be any further solicitous about it; leave the world a-while to itself.

I now direct to Ashbourne, where I suppose you are settled for a-while, and where I beg you to do what you can for the poor Colliers.

I have no national news that is not in the papers, and almost all news is bad. Perhaps no nation not absolutely conquered has declined so much in so short a time. We seem to be sinking³. Suppose the Irish having already gotten a free trade and an independent Parliament, should say we will have a King, and ally ourselves with the house of Bourbon, what could be done to hinder or to overthrow them⁴?

Judges. Lord Shelburne had only been in office two or three days when he transmitted to Sir Elijah Impey, the Chief Justice, the message by which that judge was recalled. Chambers, however, was not touched. In 1789 he was made Chief Justice. See *Life*, ii. 264, and *Nuncomar and Impey* by Sir J. F. Stephen, i. 35; ii. 6.

¹ First published in the *Catalogue of Mr. Alfred Morrison's Autographs*, ii. 343.

² He was probably a relation of Sir Wolfstan Dixey, the patron of Taylor's living of Market Bosworth. *Ante*, i. 13, n. 6.

³ Horace Walpole wrote at the end of the month:—'This country is absolutely lost. I mean, past re-

covery. . . . Ireland has shaken us off—not unfortunately, *if it goes no farther*; for it will flourish, which our jealousy hindered.' *Letters*, viii. 271.

⁴ In the session of 1779–80 Lord North, yielding to Ireland's demand for 'a free and unlimited commerce with the whole world,' carried through Parliament three bills which greatly freed her trade. *Ann. Reg.*, 1780, i. 25, 78. Horace Walpole wrote on December 20, 1779:—'Great concessions to Ireland have been adopted, are sailing through both Houses with favourable gales, have been notified to Ireland, and have pleased there, and we trust will restore harmony between these islands.' *Letters*, vii. 293. The independent Parliament was the work of Lord Rockingham's

Poor

Poor dear Dr. Lawrence is gone to die at Canterbury. He has lost his speech and the action of his right side, with very little hope of recovering them¹.

We must all go. I was so exhausted by loss of blood, and by successive disorders in the beginning of this year that I am afraid that the remaining part will hardly restore me. I have indeed rather indulged myself too much, and think to begin a stricter regimen. As it is my friends tell me from time to time that I look better, and I am very willing to believe them. Do you likewise take care of your health, we cannot well spare one another.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

London, August 4, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

798.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².

DEAR SIR,

I calculate this letter to meet you at Ashbourne, whither I hope you are well enough to come according to your purpose. And I write to warn you very carefully against useless and unnecessary vexation. To be robbed is very offensive, but you have been robbed of nothing that you can feel the want of. Let not the loss, nor the circumstances of the loss, take any hold upon your mind. This loss will in a short time repair itself, but you have a greater loss, the loss of health which must be repaired by your own prudence and diligence, and of which nothing can more obstruct the reparation than an uneasy mind.

But how are you to escape uneasiness? By company and business. Get and keep about you those with whom you are most at ease, and contrive for your mornings something to do, and bustle about it as much as you can. If you think London

short Ministry. Walpole wrote on May 18, 1782 (*ib.* viii. 222):—‘Both Houses in very few hours signed the absolute independence of Ireland. I shall not be surprised if our whole trinity is dissolved, and if Scotland should

demand a dissolution of the Union.’

¹ He died at Canterbury in June of the following year. *Life*, iv. 230, n. 2.

² From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson and Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, S.W.

a place

a place of more amusements come hither, or take any other kind of harmless diversion, but diversion of some kind or other you cannot at present be without. To muse and think will do you much harm, and if you are alone and at leisure, troublesome thoughts will force themselves upon you¹.

Be particularly careful now to drink enough², and to avoid costiveness; you will find that vexation has much more power over you, ridiculous as it may seem, if you neglect to evacuate your body.

I have now had three quiet nights together, which, I suppose, I have not for more than a year before³. I hope we shall both grow better, and have a longer enjoyment of each other.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, August 12, 1782.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

799.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR⁴.

DEAR SIR,

Though I follow you thus with letters, I have not much to say. I write because I would hear from you the state of your health and of your mind. Upon your mind in my opinion your health will very much depend, and I therefore repeat my injunction of bustle and cheerfulness. Do not muse by yourself; do not suffer yourself to be an hour without something to do. Suffer nothing disagreeable to approach you after dinner.

Of the publick I have nothing to say, there seem to be expectations of a violent session when the factions meet. Nor have I much to say of myself but that I think myself freed from all the

¹ See *Life*, ii. 440, iii. 415, for Johnson's art of managing the mind.

² See *ante*, i. 368; ii. 87.

³ On August 24 he wrote to Boswell:—'This year has been very heavy. From the middle of January

to the middle of June I was battered by one disorder after another.' *Life*, iv. 153.

⁴ From the original in the possession of Mr. George Peck, of 25 Chessham Place, Belgrave Square, S.W.

supervient

supervénient distempers of this year, and as well as when I was with you. My great complaint now is unquietness in the night.

Do not let me write again before I am told how you do. It is reasonable that you and I should be anxious for each other; our ages are not very different, and we have lived long together.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

August 17, 1782.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Do not fret.

800.

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE STRAHAN ¹.

SIR,

I have not yet read your letter through and therefore cannot answer it particularly. Of what you say so far as I have read all is, I think, true but the application. What I told him ² of your discontent on many occasions was to not provoke him but to pacify him, by representing that discontent of which he complained so much, not as any personal disrespect to him but as a cast of mind which you had always had. Your discontent on many occasions has appeared to me little short of madness, which however I did not tell him ³. Then your uneasiness at Oxford was a weak [?] thing which passed for an instance by which I do not see how he could be inflamed. The whole tendency of what I said was this, 'He is you say discontented, if he is, it is not by any personale [*sic*] disesteem to you, he is apt to be discontented.'

As to the matter of the money I am much of the mind that you have represented. But I did not think nor think now that I said anything that would hinder your father from any act of liberality ⁴.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. William R. Smith, of Greatham Moor, West Liss, Hants.

² George Strahan's father, William Strahan the printer.

³ See *ante*, i. 95, where Johnson

writing to him when a boy at school was anxious not to be suspected of betraying his state of mind.

⁴ William Strahan wrote to David Hume on January 25, 1773:—'My son George is now Vicar of Islington,

You

You may be sure, I am sure, I had no intention to hurt you, and if I have hurt you, nothing that I can do shall be omitted to repair the hurt.

You may well be at a loss to conjecture why I should injure you, whom certainly I have no reason to injure, and whom I would suffer much [rather] than injure by design, and shall be very sorry if I have done it by that train of talk which I was drawn into without design and almost without remembrance. If I have really done you harm I shall live in hope of doing you sometime as much good, though good is not so easily done.

I am, Sir,

Your most, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Aug. 19, 1782.

[Sent in a cover addressed to the Reverend Mr. Strahan.]

801.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], August 24, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 153.

802.

TO MISS LAWRENCE.

[London], August 26, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 144, *n.* 2.

803.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, September 7, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 154.

804.

TO MRS. BOSWELL.

London, September 7, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 156.

805.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, September or October. One paragraph only of this Letter is published in the *Life*, iv. 155.

with an income of between £300 and £400 a year. The purchase however cost a good deal of money, though

less than these things usually come to.' Hume's *Letters to Strahan*, p. 261.

TO

806.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ¹.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter about a week ago told me that your health is mended. Health is the basis of all happiness of [*sic*] this world gives. Your loss likewise seems to be less than I had feared.

Of the probability of Shelburne's continuance ² I can make no judgment. Sickness has this year thrown me out of the world; but I think myself growing better.

The proposal of Miss Colliers seems to be wild. If I understand it right, they wish that he should lend them money, that they may sue him for the estate ³.

I hope to let them know that if they send me their Grandfather's will, I will get some opinion upon it.

If they want money to procure it from the registry I will repay you what you advance as far as ten pounds.

Take great care of your health. Let nothing disturb you. Particularly avoid costiveness, and open no letter of business but in the morning.

If you would have me write to Mr. Hayley ⁴, about Miss Colliers, let me know. I will do anything for them that is proper.

I am, Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Sept. 21, 1782.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

807.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ⁵.

DEAR SIR,

To help the ignorant commonly requires much patience, for

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. Mellin Chamberlain, of the Boston Public Library, United States.

² The Shelburne Ministry lasted from July 13, 1782 to April 5, 1783.

³ 'He' is their step-father, Mr. Flint. *Ante*, ii. 263, n. 3.

⁴ Mr. Chamberlain is not sure of the name, and thinks it may be *Layley*. I believe it is *Langley*. See *ante*, ii. 34, n. 3, and *post*, Letter of January 16, 1783.

⁵ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 462.

the ignorant are always trying to be cunning¹. To do business by letters is very difficult, for without the opportunity of verbal questions much information is seldom obtained.

I received, I suppose, by the coach a copy of Dunn's will, and an abstract of Mr. Flint's (?)² marriage settlement. By whom they were sent I know not. The copy of the Will is so worn, that it is troublesome to open it, and has no attestation to evince its authenticity. The extract is, I think, in Mr. Flint's own hand, and has not therefore any legal credibility.

What seems to me proper to be done, but you know much better than I, is to take an exemplification³ of the will from the registry. We are then so far sure. This will I entreat you to send. If it be clear and decisive against the girls, there can be no farther use of it. If you think it doubtful, send it to Mr. Madox, and I will pay the fee.

When the will is despatched, the marriage settlement is to be examined, which if Mr. Flint refuses to shew, he gives such ground of suspicion as will justify a legal compulsion to shew it.

It may perhaps be better that I should appear busy in this matter than you, and if you think it best, I will write to Lichfield that a copy of the will may be sent to you, for I would have you read it. I should be told the year of Mr. Dunn's death.

I think the generosity of Mr. Flint somewhat suspicious. I have however not yet condemned him nor would irritate him too much, for perhaps the girls must at last be content with what he shall give them.

My letter, which you shewed to Miss Collier, she did not understand, but supposed that I charged her with asking money of Mr. Flint, in order to sue him. I only meant that her proposal was to him eventually the same, and was therefore, as I called it, wild.

¹ 'Every man wishes to be wise, and they who cannot be wise are almost always cunning . . . nor is caution ever so necessary as with associates or opponents of feeble minds.' *The Idler*, No 92.

² See *ante*, ii. 263. Johnson in

1774 visited Mr. Flint at Ashbourne. *Life*, v. 430.

³ The only definition Johnson gives of *exemplification* in his *Dictionary* is as it is here used—'a copy; a transcript.'

I hope your health improves. I am told that I look better and better. I am going, idly enough, to Brighthelmston. I try, as I would have you do, to keep my body open, and my mind quiet.

I hope my attention grows more fixed. When I was last at your house I began, if I remember right, another perusal of the Bible, which notwithstanding all my disorders I have read through except the Psalms. I concluded the twenty second of last month. I hope, for as many years as God shall grant me, to read it through at least once every year¹.

Boswel's Father is dead, and Boswel wrote me word that he would come to London for my advice. [The] advice which I sent him is to stay at home and [busy] himself with his own affairs². He has a good es[tate] considerably burthened by settlements, and he is himself in debt. But if his wife lives, I think he will be prudent³.

I am, Sir,

Yours affectiona[tely]

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Oct. 4, 1782.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor in Ashbourn, Derbyshire.

808.

SIR,

TO THE REVEREND JAMES COMPTON⁴.

I have directed Dr. Vyse's letter to be sent to you, that you may know the situation of your business. Delays are incident

¹ On Easter Eve, 1772, Johnson recorded:—'I resolved last Easter to read within the year the whole Bible, a very great part of which I had never looked upon. I read the Greek Testament without construing, and this day concluded the Apocalypse.' *Pr. and Med.*, p. 112. A week later he recorded:—'It is a comfort to me that at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to know even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains.' *Ib.* p. 118.

² Boswell wrote to Johnson on

August 30 to say that his father had died that morning, and received an answer dated September 7. *Life*, iv. 154. 'In answer to my next letter,' continues Boswell, 'I received one from him dissuading me from hastening to him, as I had proposed.' Johnson's advice was, no doubt, prudent, but the *Life of Johnson* is all the poorer for it. He commonly, perhaps always, spelt Boswell *Boswel*.

³ She died in June, 1789.

⁴ First published in Malone's *Boswell*, iv. 225.

Compton was the Librarian of the
to

to all affairs; but there appears nothing in your case of either superciliousness or neglect. Dr. Vyse seems to wish you well.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Oct. 6, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Mr. Compton.

809.

SIR,

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE STRAHAN¹.

When I called last week, to do a little business in New Street², I found the difference between you and your Father still subsisting, and though I have reason to think you sufficiently prejudiced against my advice, I will, without much anxiety about my reception, suggest some reasons, for which, in my opinion, you ought to make peace as soon as you can.

All quarrels grow more complicated by time, and as they grow more complicated, grow harder to be adjusted.

When a dispute is made publick by references and appeals, which neither your Father nor you have enough avoided, there mingles with interest or resentment a foolish feint of honour. Perhaps each part will yield, were not each ashamed.

Your dispute has already gone so far, that the first concession ought to come from you, since you may without any disgrace yield to your Father, and your Father will hardly yield to you, but with some dishonour to both.

Convent of the Benedictines in which Johnson had a cell appropriated to him in his visit to Paris in 1775. Compton came over to England 'and renounced the errors of Popery.' Being in great distress he called on Johnson, who having heard his story 'with the warmest expressions of tenderness and esteem put into his hand a guinea, assuring him that he might expect support from him till a provision for him could be found. He furnished him with decent apparel, and introduced him to the Bishop of London, who licensed him to preach in his diocese.' Hawkins's *Johnson*,

p. 530. Malone in a note gives further information. See *post*, Letter of April 19, 1783.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. William R. Smith, of Greatham Moor, West Liss, Hants.

² New Street, Fetter Lane, 'whither in February, 1770, the King's printing-house was removed from what is still called Printing House Square.' CROKER. In 1770 William Strahan had purchased from George Eyre 'a share of the patent for King's Printer.' *Letters of Hume to Strahan*, p. xliii. For the difference between the father and son, see *ante*, ii. 267.

You

You might therefore properly make the first advances, even if your Father were in the wrong, of which, if I understand the question, you will find it difficult to convict him.

When a man is asked for money which he does not owe he has a right to enquire, why the demand is made.

When you tell him that you ask for money because you want it, he may again very reasonably enquire why you are in want who have already much more than is generally appendant to your station.

To this question it is my advice that you give a calm, decent, and general answer. Neither your Friends wish, nor, I suppose, your Father wishes that you should show bills and receipts, though of those you need not be ashamed, for nobody suspects your expences of anything vitious, but that you should tell in a manly and liberal way why your income falls short of your desires.

With a general account, such as may liberally give him the victory, your Father will probably be satisfied, and this account it will be prudent rather to write than to give in person, though to a written account there may be objections. You will use your discretion.

My serious, and whatever you may think, my friendly advice is that you make haste to reconciliation. Those who encourage either to persist, mean ill to one of you, perhaps without meaning well to the other, or without much malice or any kindness divert themselves with your discord, and are quietly amused by guessing the event.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Brighthelmston¹, Oct. 10, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Mr. Strahan at Islington, London.

810.

SIR,

To JOHN NICHOLS².

While I am at Brighthelmston, if you have any need of

¹ Johnson wrote to Boswell:—‘I came to Brighthelmston in a state of so much weakness that I rested four times in walking between the inn and the lodging.’ *Life*, vi. 156.

² First published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784, page 893; and subsequently in part in the *Life*, iv. 161.

consulting me, Mr. Strahan will do us the favour to transmit our papers under his frank.

I have looked often into your *Anecdotes*¹, and you will hardly thank a lover of literary history for telling you that he has been informed and gratified. I wish you would add your own discoveries and intelligence to those of Dr. Rawlinson, and undertake the Supplement to Wood². Think on it.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Brighthelmston, Oct. 10, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To Mr. Nicol.

811.

TO MAURITIUS LOWE³.

SIR,

October 22, 1782.

I congratulate you on the good that has befallen you. I always told you that it would come. I would not, however, have you flatter yourself too soon with punctuality. You must not expect the other half year at Christmas. You may use the money as your needs require; but save what you can.

You must undoubtedly write a letter of thanks to your benefactor in your own name. I have put something on the other side⁴.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ John Nichols published in 1782 *Anecdotes of William Bowyer, Printer*. In 1812-15 he brought out this work, recast and enlarged, under the title of *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*.

² Rawlinson had made MS. collections for a continuation of Wood's *Athenae*.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 709.

For Mauritius Lowe, see *ante*, ii. 203.

⁴ Amongst the papers of Mr. Lowe was found, in Dr. Johnson's handwriting, the following draft of a letter:—

“MY LORD,

The allowance which you are pleased to make me, I received on the ——— by Mr. Puget. Of the joy which it brought your lordship cannot judge, because you cannot imagine my distress. It was long since I had known a morning without solicitude for noon, or lain down at night without foreseeing, with terror, the distresses of the morning. My debts were small, but many; my creditors were poor, and therefore troublesome. Of this misery your lordship's bounty has given me an intermission. May your lordship

TO

812.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

DEAR SIR,

You somehow forgot the advertisement² for the new edition. It was not enclosed.

Of Gay's *Letters* I see not that any use can be made, for they give no information of any thing. That he was a member of the Philosophical Society is something; but surely he could be but a corresponding member. However, not having his life here, I know not how to put it in, and it is of little importance³.

What will the Booksellers give me for this new edition? I know not what to ask⁴. I would have 24 sets bound in plain calf, and figured with [the] number of the volumes. For the rest they may please themselves.

I wish, Sir, you could obtain some fuller information of Jortin,

live long to do much good, and to do for many what you have done for, my Lord, your lordship's &c.,

"M. LOWE."

Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, vii. 346.

'My Lord' was probably Lord Southwell.

¹ First published partly in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 11, and partly in the *Life*, iv. 36, n. 4, 161.

² The brief Preface to the *Lives* Johnson, in accordance with the usage of the time, heads *Advertisement*.

³ The Philosophical Society was probably the Spalding Society, 'a Society of Gentlemen for the supporting of mutual Benevolence, and their Improvement in the Liberal Sciences and Polite Learning.' Of this Society Nichols gives an account in his *Literary Anecdotes*, vi. 28. In the list of Members we find:— 'John Gay, esq. *lepidissimus Poeta*; October 31, 1728. Died 1732.' *Ib.* p. 84.

⁴ On December 7 of this year Johnson wrote to Boswell:—'Of my *Lives of the Poets* they have printed a new edition in octavo, I hear of three thousand.' *Life*, iv. 157. In Mr. Alfred Morrison's Collection of Autographs I have seen the following curious document:—

'Received February 19, 1783, of the Proprietors of the *Lives of the Poets* by the hands of Thomas Cadell One Hundred Pounds for Revising the last Edition of that Work.

£100 0 0 SAM. JOHNSON.'

(The signature alone is in Johnson's hand.)

Below this receipt is pasted on the following paper in his writing:—

'It is great impudence to put Johnson's *Poets* on the back of books which Johnson neither recommended nor revised.

He recommended only Blackmore on the Creation and Watts. How then are they Johnson's? This is indecent.'

T 2

Markland,

Markland, and Thirlby¹. They were three contemporaries of great eminence.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

[Brighthelmstone], Oct. 28, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

This is all that I can think on, therefore send it to the press, and fare it well. SAM: JOHNSON.

813.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Brighthelmstone, November 14, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 161.

814.

SIR,

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN².

Your kindness gives you a right to such intelligence relating to myself as I can give you.

¹ For these three men see *Life*, iv. 161. Jortin is said to be the author of the line, *Palmar qui meruit ferat*.

When on his death-bed he was offered some nourishment 'he said with great composure:—"No, I have had enough of everything." A worthy clergyman asked him why he did not publish his Sermons. "They shall sleep," he replied, "till I sleep." Nichols's *Lit. Anec.* ii. 570.

Of Jeremiah Markland Nichols gives a long account in *Lit. Anec.* iv. 272. Porson thought so highly of him as a scholar that 'he went to see the house near Dorking where he had spent his later years and where he died.' *Table-Talk of S. Rogers*, ed. 1856, p. 322. In his early manhood, when the vote came on before the Senate at Cambridge for the degradation of Bentley, he might have 'saved by his single voice the great hero of literature from the unseemly fate that awaited him. But in the heat and clamour of that day the voice of learning had little chance of being heard.' Monk's *Life of Bentley*, ed. 1833, ii. 59, 169.

Of Thirlby Nichols records the following anecdote on Johnson's authority. "He went through my school," says Mr. Kilby, "in three years; and his self-conceit was censured as very offensive. He thought he knew more than all the school." "Perhaps," said a gentleman, to whom this was told, "he thought rightly." *Lit. Anec.* iv. 264. For his insolence towards Bentley see Monk's *Life of Bentley*, i. 289; ii. 167. He supplied Theobald with emendations of Shakespeare's text, of which the following is one of the most ingenious. A couplet in Oberon's song in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act iv. sc. 1, used to run:—

'Dian's bud, or Cupid's flower

Hath such force and blessed power.'
He altered it:—

'Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower,
&c.'

JOHNSON'S *Shakespeare*, i. 152.

² From the original in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam, of 448 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y., United States.

My

My friends all tell me that I am grown much better since my arrival at this place. I do not for my own part think myself well, but certainly I mend.

I shall not stay here above a week longer, and indeed it is not easy to tell why we stay so long, for the company is gone¹.

Last Friday or Saturday there was at this place the greatest take of herrings that has been ever known. The number caught was eight lasts, which at eight thousand a last, make eight hundred thousand².

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Make my compliments to dear Mrs. Strahan.

Brighthelmstone, Nov. 14, 1782.

To William Strahan, Esq., M.P., London.

815.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, December 7, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 156.

816.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR³.

Your letter contained almost an answer to that which you had not received

Take great care of your health. I am sorry that you are still subject to unprovoked disorders; but now you are better, be very tender of yourself. Had you been costive? or had any

¹ When the company was there Johnson had been much neglected. *Life*, iv. 159, n. 3. On November 20 Miss Burney, who was of the party, records in her Diary:—"Mrs. and the three Miss Thrales and myself all arose at six o'clock in the morning, and "by the pale blink of the moon" we went to the seaside, where we had bespoke the bathing-women to be ready for us, and into the ocean we plunged. We then returned home, dressed by

candle-light, and as soon as we could get Dr. Johnson ready we set out upon our journey in a coach and a chaise and arrived in Argyll Street at dinner time." Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 184. See *ante*, ii. 123, n. 1.

² Johnson must have meant to write:—"The number caught was a hundred lasts."

³ Copied from the facsimile of the original in Mr. Alfred Morrison's *Catalogue of Autographs*, ii. 342.

thing disturbed you? I have but two rules for you, keep your body open, and your mind quiet.

Sickness concentrates a man's attention so much in himself, that he thinks little upon the affairs of others¹. Now I have a little gleam of health, I have the business of the Miss Colliers almost to begin: I do not know what it is that Mr. Flint offers². Make me as much master of the business as you can, yet I am afraid of giving you trouble. I would write to the Miss Colliers if I knew how. Shall I send my letter under cover to you, or to any other person?

Miss Collier writes well, and can perhaps tell me something of importance. Let me know what I shall do.

Take a scrupulous and diligent care of your health, that we may yet have a little comfort in each other.

I am, Sir,

Your most affectionate,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, December 9, 1782.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

817.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN³.

SIR,

In your letter there is no need of alteration, it may serve its purpose very well as it is, but if you change any thing, I think you may better say nothing of his cloaths, for if you allow him five suits in two years, they will cost near £45 and the other £25 will easily go for linen shoes and all other parts of cloathing⁴.

¹ 'Depend upon it, Sir,' said Johnson, 'when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight it concentrates his mind wonderfully.' *Life*, iii. 167. On February 11, 1784, he wrote to Boswell who had sent him a Pamphlet:—'You will forgive a man struggling with disease his neglect of disputes, politics and pamphlets.' *Ib.* iv. 260.

² *Ante*, ii. 270.

³ From the original in the possession of Mr. William R. Smith, of

Greatham Moor, West Liss, Hampshire.

For the subject of the letter see *ante*, ii. 272. That it should have come, as it did, into the possession of the son was scarcely fair to Johnson.

⁴ In the *Life of Bishop Porteus* is the letter of a poor clergyman written in 1778. For 42 years he had been Curate of Wood Plumpton, near Preston; 'where I have led,' he writes, 'an obscure contemplative

Suppose

Suppose you concluded your letter with something like this.

You express your desire of seeing me, and therefore I think it [word omitted] to let you know, that whenever you bring with you that respect and gratitude to which I am entitled, you shall find me no longer

Your offended &c.

This is all that occurs, except that perhaps it were as well not to insist on a minute knowledge of the wife's expences, but to blame the first article as indistinct, without requiring it to be reformed.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

Dec. 11, 1782.

SAM: JOHNSON.

818.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR LADY,

December 20, 1782.

I hope the worst is at last over. I had a very good night, and slept very long. You can hardly think how bad I have been while you were in all your altitudes, at the Opera², and all the fine places, and thinking little of me. Sastres³ has been very good. Queeney never sent me a kind word. I hope however

life. I have brought up six sons and six daughters to men's and women's estates. All my annual income is something more than £40 a year. Such is the indigence I am reduced to at present, that were it not for religious prospects I should be wretched beyond the utmost energy of language to express.' Porteus's *Works*, i. 49. The Vicar of Islington was every year to spend in clothes alone within five or six pounds of this Curate's income. Goldsmith spent on a single suit twelve guineas (*Life*, ii. 83, n. 3); but a clergyman in his dress could not go to the same height of extravagance as a poet.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 252.

² 'Thursday [December 19] Mrs. Thrale and her daughter carried me to the Opera House.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 203. A few days later she records:—'I went in the evening to call on Mrs. Thrale, and tore myself away from her to go to Bolt Court to see Dr. Johnson, who is very unwell. He received me with great kindness, and bade me come oftener, which I will try to contrive. He told me he heard of nothing but me, call upon him who would [she had lately published her *Cecilia*]; and though he pretended to growl he was evidently delighted for me.' *Ib.* p. 211.

³ The Italian master.

to be with you again in a short time, and shew you a man again.

I am, Madam,
Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

819.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. Dec. 26, 1782.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of May 10, 1875, Lot 126 is an autograph note on a card of Johnson to Sir Joshua Reynolds, dated Dec. 26, 1782, declining an invitation on account of illness.

On Dec. 27 Miss Burney found Dr. Johnson at Mrs. Thrale's house, and found him 'very comic and good-humoured. Susan Thrale had just had her hair turned up and powdered, and has taken to the womanly robe. Dr. Johnson sportively gave her instructions how to increase her consequence, and to "take upon her" properly. "Begin," said he, "Miss Susy, with something grand—something to surprise mankind. Let your first essay in life be a warm censure of *Cecilia*.'" Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 215. Miss Burney was at the dinner at Sir Joshua's the following day. *Ib.* p. 216.

820.

TO THE REVEREND THOMAS WILSON.

[London], December 31, 1782. Published in the *Life*, iv. 162.

821.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

Your last little note was very unsatisfactory. That a silly timorous unskilful Girl has behaved improperly, is a poor reason for refusing to tell me what expectations have been raised by the will, and what questions I must ask the Lawyers, questions which if you do not like to answer them, I must ask elsewhere, and I am unwilling to mingle this affair with any name that you may hear with disgust².

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 462.

² The silly girl was no doubt Miss Collier, and the name that Taylor might hear with disgust that of Mr. Langley. *Ante*, i. 347, and *post*, p. 282.

This,

This, my dear Sir, is the last day of a very sickly and melancholy year¹. Join your prayers with mine, that the next may be more happy to us both. I hope the happiness which I have not found in this world, will by infinite mercy be granted in another.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Dec. 31, 1782.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

822.

SIR,

TO JOHN NICHOLS².

Jan. 10, 1783.

I am much obliged by your kind communication of your account of Hinkley³. I knew Mr. Carte as one of the Prebendaries of Lichfield, and for some time Surrogate of the Chancellor. Now I will put you in a way of shewing me more kindness. I have been confined by illness [sic] a long time, and sickness and solitude make tedious evenings. Come sometimes, and see, Sir,

Your humble servant,

To Mr. Nichol.

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ On his birthday in 1781 (September 18) he had recorded:—'As I came home from church I thought I had never begun any period of life so placidly.' *Pr. and Med.* p. 198.

² First published in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, ii. 551, and compared by me with the original in the British Museum. It is possible that this letter is misdated 1783 instead of 1784, as by January 10, 1783, Johnson, though ill, had not been long confined to the house. On the 4th he had dined at Dr. Burney's. 'He was very ill,' writes Miss Burney, 'and only from an extreme of kindness did he come. All dinner time he hardly opened his mouth

but to repeat to me:—"Ah! you little know how ill I am." He was excessively kind to me in spite of all his pain. He was so ill that after dinner he went home.' This was unfortunate, as in the evening Dr. Parr came. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 227.

³ Nichols published in 1782, *The History and Antiquities of Hincley in Leicestershire*. *Lit. Anec.* vi. 632. In his *History of Leicestershire*, ii. 168, the Rev. Samuel Carte is praised as 'a most judicious antiquary.' Carte was admitted Prebendary of Lichfield in 1682. Le Neve's *Fast. Ecc. Ang.* i. 629.

823.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

I have for some time been labouring under very great disorder of Body, and distress of Mind. I wish that in our latter days we may give some comfort to each other. Let us at least not be angry, nor suppose each other angry. We have no time to lose in petulance. I beg you not to take amiss that I trouble you once more about the Colliers. I have but you and Mr. Langley to consult, and him I never have consulted, because you dislike him².

I would shew the Lawyers the papers, but that I know not what questions to ask nor can state the case, till I am informed with regard to some particulars³.

What do Miss Colliers suppose will be discovered in the writings?

Had Mr. Flint a son by their Mother? I think he has. What had he with their Mother? I think about £200 a year. What do they ask from Mr. Flint?

What does he offer them? This you have told me, but my memory is not distinct about it, and I know not how to find your letter. Tell me again.

All that has a bad appearance on Flint's part, is his requisition of a discharge from future claims. If they have no claims, what is the discharge? Yet this may be only unskilfulness in him.

I think there is no reason to suppose that Mrs. Flint's estate could be settled by her father exclusively upon Collier's children, or that she should be advised at her marriage with Mr. Flint to debar herself from providing for her future children, whatever they might be, in their due proportions.

Do answer this, and add what it is necessary for me to know, and I hope to trouble you no more about it. When I have your answer I will transact with Mr. Flint and Miss Collier; or with as little trouble to you as I can.

You and I have lived on together to the time of sickness and weakness. We are now beginning another year; may the

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 462.

² *Ante*, ii. 280, n. 2.

³ *Ante* ii. 263, 269.

merciful God protect us both. Let us not neglect our salvation, but help each other forward in our way as well as we can.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate

London, Jan. 16, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

824.

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE STRAHAN¹.

SIR,

I had very lately a visit from Mr. Strahan, our talk was of you, and I am sure he will tell you that I have never been your enemy. What passed is too long to be written, but if you will call on me to-morrow in Bolt court, where I shall be in the afternoon on purpose to receive you, I hope that Peace may be made.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Thursday, Jan. 16, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

825.

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE STRAHAN².

SIR,

[? January, 1783.]

You seem to suppose that your Father had some influence on my Letter. You are utterly mistaken. He knows nothing

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. William R. Smith, Greatham Moor, West Liss, Hampshire. For the subject of the Letter, see *ante*, ii. 272. On the back is written, no doubt in George Strahan's hand: 'Mr. G. Strahan presents his best Respects to Dr. Johnson, is much obliged to him for any service he may have done him, and will wait upon him To-morrow according to his Appointment.'

'Islington, January 16, 1783.'

² From the original in the possession of Mr. William R. Smith, Greatham Moor, West Liss, Hamp-

shire. The letter is imperfect.

The following mention of George Strahan by Benjamin Franklin, I have only discovered since my earlier notes were in type:—Franklin wrote to W. Strahan on June 10, 1763:—'Tell me whether George is to be a Church or Presbyterian parson. I know you are a Presbyterian yourself; but then I think you have more sense than to stick him into a priesthood that admits of no promotion. If he was a dull lad it might not be amiss, but George has parts, and ought to aim at a Mitre.' Franklin's *Works*, ed. 1887, iii. 240.

of it. My reason for writing was, if I had done any mischief to undo it as far as I could by good counsel. You have done what I wished to be done, and I have nothing more to recommend. Of promises I know nothing, and have nothing to say.

The conference may perhaps as well be forborn [sic], but if must be, it will probably be made by the pressure of others shorter and more moderate; and may therefore do less harm, if it does no good.

[A part of the letter cut off.]

Debts of kindness there may be, but surely those debts are not very niggardly paid, when nothing is required but to show that they are wanted.

I flatter myself that by this time peace and content are restored among you, if not, I wish I could recal [sic] them.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

826.

TO JOSEPH CRADOCK¹.

Jan. 20, 1783.

Mr. Johnson is very glad of any intelligence, and much obliged by Mr. Cradock's favour and attention. The book which he has now sent shall be taken care of; but of a former book mentioned in the note Mr. Johnson has no remembrance, and can hardly think he ever received it, though bad health may possibly have made him negligent.

To Mr. Cradock.

¹ First published in *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, by Joseph Cradock, 1828, i. 243. Cradock says that he had borrowed for Johnson from Lord Harborough 'a folio volume of manuscripts, magnificently bound, which contained poems by James I and others.' On receiving Johnson's letter, he consulted Steevens who said:—'That then is the book which now lies under his inkstand; it is neatly packed up and sealed,

and I never was able to make out what it was.' Cradock was at Marseilles when the news of Johnson's death reached him. He at once wrote to Reynolds and Cadell about the book. They replied that they had found it unopened on the very spot where Steevens had seen it, and they had returned it to Lord Harborough. For a brief notice of Cradock, see *Life*, iii. 38.

To

827.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

I am glad that your friends are not among the promoters of equal representation, which I consider as specious in theory, but dangerous in experiment, as equitable in itself, but above human wisdom to be equitably adjusted, and which is now proposed only to distress the government².

An equal representation can never form a constitution, because it can have no stability; for whether you regulate the representation by numbers or by property, that which is equal to-day, will be unequal in a week.

To change the constituent parts of government must be always dangerous, for who can tell where changes will stop? A new representation will want the reverence of antiquity, and the firmness of Establishment. The new senate will be considered as mushrooms which springing in a day may be blasted in a night.

What will a parliament chosen in any new manner, whether more or less numerous, do which is not done by such parliaments as we have? Will it be less tumultuous, if we have more, or less mercenary, if we have fewer? There is no danger that the parliament as now chosen should betray any of our important rights, and that is all that we can wish.

If the scheme were more reasonable, this is not a time for

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 481.

² On May 7 in the previous year the younger Pitt had moved for a Committee to enquire into the present state of the representation, and had been defeated by only twenty votes. *Parl. Hist.* xxii. 1416. On the same day in the next year (1783) he brought forward a motion for a Reform in Parliament. It was lost by 144 votes. *Ib.* xxiii. 827.

Horace Walpole, who belonged to the same party among the Whigs as those described by Johnson as Taylor's friends, wrote on the morrow of Pitt's defeat:—'The object of altering the Representation I think most dangerous. We know pretty well what good or evil the present state of the House of Commons can do, what an enlargement might achieve, no man can tell.' *Letters*, viii. 362.

innovation.

innovation. I am afraid of a civil war. The business of every wise man seems to be now to keep his ground¹.

I am very glad you are coming.

I am, &c.,

SAM : JOHNSON.

Jan. 21, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

828.

TO MISS LAWRENCE.

Bolt-court, February 4, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 144, *n.* 2.

829.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS².

SIR,

Mr. Mason's address to you deserves no great praise³; it is lax without easiness, and familiar without gaiety. Of his translation I think much more favourably, so far as I have read, which is not a great part. I find him better than exact; he has his author's distinctness and clearness without his dryness and sterility⁴.

¹ Burke speaking about Reform of Parliament, said :—'Too dangerous an experiment to risk. Not any reform proposed yet that did not seem to him highly hazardous. The least exceptionable that of Lord Chatham's "adding fifty Knights of the shire"; but this, as well as the rest already proposed, not to be thought upon in such times as these, or perhaps ever.' Mr. Burke's *Table-Talk*, *Misc. of the Philobiblon Society*, vii. 52. Gibbon wrote on May 30, 1792 :—'If you do not resist the spirit of innovation in the first attempt, if you admit the smallest and most specious change in our parliamentary system, you are lost.' *Misc. Works*, i. 349. In the same year Fox said 'he might be asked, why his name was not on the

list of the Society for Reform. His reason was, that though he saw great and enormous grievances he did not see the remedy.' Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ed. 1826, ii. 182.

² First published in Leslie and Taylor's *Life of Reynolds*, ii. 392.

³ Mason translated into English verse Du Fresnoy's Latin poem *De Arte Graphica*, prefixing in verse *An Epistle to Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Reynolds illustrated the translation with a series of notes.

⁴ 'The version of *Fresnoy* I think the finest translation I ever saw. It is a most beautiful poem, extracted from as dry and prosaic a parcel of verses as could be put together.' Walpole's *Letters*, viii. 73.

As

As I suppose you have lost your *Lives* I desire you to accept of these volumes, and to keep them somewhere out of harm's way, that you may sometimes remember the writer¹.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

February 19, 1783.

830.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS².

SIR,

March 4, 1783.

I have sent you back Mr. Crabbe's poem, which I read with great delight. It is original, vigorous, and elegant.

The alterations which I have made I do not require him to adopt, for my lines are, perhaps, not often better [than] his own; but he may take mine and his own together, and perhaps between them produce something better than either³. He is not to think his copy wantonly defaced; a wet sponge will wash all the red lines away, and leave the pages clean.

His Dedication will be least liked: it were better to contract

¹ Johnson had probably given Reynolds the first four volumes of the *Lives*, when they appeared in 1779. In assuming that he had lost them he has perhaps a pleasant hit at his loss of Goldsmith's epitaph. *Ante*, i. 407. The original of this Letter, together with the ten volumes whole bound in calf which had accompanied them, was sold for £12 15s. by Messrs. Sotheby & Co. on May 10, 1875 (Lot 100).

² Published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 716, and in Crabbe's *Works*, ed. 1834, ii. 12.

In 1780 Crabbe had come up to London with three pounds in his pocket, as a Literary Adventurer, and for some months had lived a life of baffled hope. Rejected by the publishers, his last shilling gone, he

wrote to Burke. 'He was "a made man" from that hour.' Burke spoke of him to Reynolds. 'He has the mind and feelings of a gentleman,' he said. At Sir Joshua's table he met Johnson; and a few days afterwards he called on him in Bolt Court. 'Never fear,' said Johnson, 'putting the strongest and best things you can think of into the mouth of your speaker, whatever may be his condition.' Reynolds, in forwarding to Crabbe Johnson's letter, said:—'If you knew how cautious Dr. Johnson was in giving commendation, you would be well satisfied with the portion dealt to you in his letter.' Crabbe's *Works*, i. 91-100; ii. 12.

³ Of these alterations Boswell gives a specimen. *Life*, iv. 175.

it into a short sprightly address ¹. I do not doubt of Mr. Crabbe's success.

I am, Sir,
Your most humble servant,
SAM: JOHNSON.

831.

TO DR. SCOTT.

In Messrs. Christie and Co's Auction Catalogue of June 5, 1888, Lot 52 is a Letter of Johnson to Dr. Scott [afterwards Lord Stowell], one page quarto, dated March 4, 1783. 'Asking him to give employment to a young man for whom he is interested; and saying, "He is not without literature, and I hope he will be diligent."'

It is very likely that the young man was Crabbe, for whom his friends were seeking for employment. Burke was struck with his fund of general knowledge. 'Mr. Crabbe,' he said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'appears to know something of every thing.' Crabbe's *Works*, i. 97.

832.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], April 12, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 201.

833.

TO JAMES BARRY.

[London], April 12, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 202.

834.

TO JOSEPH FOWKE².

DEAR SIR,

April 19, 1783.

To shew you that neither length of time, nor distance of place, withdraws you from my memory, I have sent you a little present³, which will be transmitted by Sir Rob. Chambers⁴.

To your former letters I made no answer, because I had none

¹ Neither Dedication nor Address was adopted. Crabbe's *Works*, ii. 13, n. 1.

² First published in *Original Letters*, ed. by Rebecca Warner, 1817, page 207.

For an account of Joseph Fowke, who was in India, see *ante*, i. 409.

³ No doubt his *Lives of the Poets*.

⁴ One of the Judges in the Supreme Court. *Ante*, ii. 263, n. 4.

to make. Of the death of the unfortunate man¹, I believe Europe thinks as you think ; but it was past prevention ; and it was not fit for me to move a question in public which I was not qualified to discuss, as the enquiry could then do no good ; and I might have been silenced by a hardy denial of facts, which, if denied, I could not prove.

Since we parted, I have suffered much sickness of body and perturbation of mind. My mind, if I do not flatter myself, is unimpaired, except that sometimes my memory is less ready ; but my body, though by nature very strong, has given way to repeated shocks.

*Genua labant, vastos quatit ager anhelitus artus*². This line might have been written on purpose for me. You will see, however, that I have not totally forsaken literature. I can apply better to books than I could in some more vigorous parts of my life, at least than I *did* ; and I have one more reason for reading ; that time has, by taking away my companions, left me less opportunity of conversation³. I have led an inactive and careless life ; it is time at last to be diligent. There is yet provision to be made for eternity.

¹ Nuncomar. *Ante*, i. 410, n. 1.

² 'But each vast limb moves stiff
and slow with age,
And thick short pantings shake
the lab'ring sage.'

C. PITT. *Æneid*, v. 432.

³ In 1763 Johnson said to Boswell :—'Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now.' *Life*, i. 445. In 1766 he wrote to Langton :—'I continue to rise tolerably well, and read more than I did.' *Ib.* ii. 20. In 1767 he told the King that 'he thought more than he read ; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much compared with others.' *Ib.* ii. 36. Malone, who had called on him two or three months

before the date of this Letter, says :—'I found him in his arm-chair by the fire-side, before which a few apples were laid. He was reading. I asked him what book he had got. He said the *History of Birmingham*. Local histories, I observed, were generally dull. "It is true, Sir ; but this has a peculiar merit with me ; for I passed some of my early years, and married my wife there." I supposed the apples were preparing as medicine. "Why, no, Sir ; I believe they are only there because I want something to do. These are some of the solitary expedients to which we are driven by sickness. I have been confined this week past ; and here you find me roasting apples, and reading the *History of Birmingham*."' Prior's *Malone*, p. 92.

Let me know, dear Sir, what you are doing. Are you accumulating gold, or picking up diamonds? Or are you now sated with Indian wealth, and content with what you have? Have you vigour for bustle, or tranquillity for inaction? Whatever you do, I do not suspect you of pillaging or oppressing; and shall rejoice to see you return with a body unbroken, and a mind uncorrupted.

You and I had hardly any common friends; and therefore I have few anecdotes to relate to you. Mr. Levet, who brought us into acquaintance, died suddenly at my house last year, in his seventy-eighth year, or about that age. Mrs. Williams, the blind lady, is still with me, but much broken by a very wearisome and obstinate disease. She is, however, not likely to die; and it would delight me if you would send her some *petty* token of your remembrance. You may send me one too.

Whether we shall ever meet again in this world, who can tell? Let us, however, wish well to each other: prayers can pass the Line and the Tropics¹.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely²,

SAM: JOHNSON.

835.

TO THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF THE MERCERS³.

GENTLEMEN,

At the request of the Reverend Mr. James Compton, who now solicits your votes to be elected Under Master of St. Paul's School, I testify with great sincerity, that he is, in my opinion, a man of abilities sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the duties of the office for which he is a candidate.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, April 19, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Prayers apparently would take the longer course round the Cape of Good Hope.

² No other letter of Johnson's ends

'Yours sincerely.'

³ First published in Malone's *Boswell*. For Mr. Compton see *ante*, ii. 271.

836.

MY LORD, TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH¹. April 25, 1783.

The bearer, Mr. Desmoulins, has persuaded himself that some testimonial from me will be useful to him in his application to your Lordship, and I hope that what I yield merely to his importunity will not be imputed to any vain conceit of my own importance.

He desires indeed nothing to be said but what is true; that he is not in difficulties by his own fault; that he has a brother and sister in great distress, and that if he should by your Lordship's favour now obtain any little employment, he will, I hope, do the business faithfully, and use the income properly.

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient
and most humble servant,
SAM: JOHNSON.

837.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM, London, [Thursday] May-day, 1783.

I am glad that you went to Streatham, though you could

¹ First published in the *Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, volume xi, appendix v, page 447.

The Earl of Dartmouth on April 9 had been made Lord Steward of the Household. *Book of Dignities*, ed. 1890, p. 290. Johnson might have made his acquaintance at the time of the Cock Lane Ghost, of which, according to Horace Walpole (*Letters*, iii. 481), 'the Earl was one of the two great patrons.' Walpole describes him as sitting 'in the odour of devotion' at Dr. Dodd's Chapel. *Ib.* p. 282. Cunningham says in a note on this passage:—'William Legge, second Earl of Dartmouth (died 1801), the same of whom

Richardson said, he would have been called the living Sir Charles Grandison, had he not been a Methodist; and the peer not too proud to pray, celebrated by Cowper.'

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 255.

Mrs. Piozzi publishes a letter written by her at Bath on Good Friday, in which she says, 'Harriet is dead; Cicely is dying,' and that she was hurrying up to London. *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 253. 'Dear Harriet,' she says, 'died of measles, hooping-cough and strumous swellings in the neck and throat.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 271. Why she had left her dying child, and the other who was thought to be dying, to strangers to nurse she forgets to

not save the dear pretty little girl. I loved her, for she was Thrale's and your's, and by her dear father's appointment in some sort mine¹: I love you all, and therefore cannot without regret see the phalanx broken, and reflect that you and my other dear girls are deprived of one that was born your friend. To such friends, every one that has them, has recourse at last, when it is discovered, and discovered it seldom fails to be, that the fortuitous friendships of inclination or vanity are at the mercy of a thousand accidents². But we must still our disquiet with remembering that, where there is no guilt, all is for the best. I am glad to hear that Cecily is so near recovery.

For some days after your departure³ I was pretty well, but I have begun to languish again, and last night was very tedious and oppressive. I excused myself to-day from dining with General Paoli, where I love to dine⁴, but I was griped by the talons of necessity.

On Saturday I dined, as is usual, at the opening of the Exhibition. Our company was splendid, whether more numerous than at any former time I know not⁵. Our tables seem always full. On Monday, if I am told truth, were received at the door one hundred and ninety pounds, for the admission of three

mention. Mr. Hayward calls her letter an answer to Johnson's last (*ante*, ii. 279), though she wrote on Good Friday and he had written before Christmas. She had been at the Opera at the time when he wrote. For little Harriet's pretty speech, see *ante*, ii. 239, *n.* 1. The child's name was Henrietta Sophia; she was buried at Streatham on April 25.

¹ Johnson had been left their guardian. *Post*, p. 303.

² For Johnson's 'innocent envy of those who may be said to be born to friends,' see *ante*, ii. 237, *n.* 2. He was sadly discovering that his 'fortuitous friendship' with Mrs. Thrale was rapidly coming to an end.

³ Hawkins found the following

entry in Johnson's *Diary*:—'1783, April 5. I took leave of Mrs. Thrale. I was much moved. I had some expostulations with her. She said that she was likewise affected. I commended the Thrales with great good-will to God; may my petitions have been heard.' Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, p. 553. See *post*, p. 303.

⁴ Boswell quotes these words, *Life*, iv. 330.

⁵ 'It was more numerous; 80 (at 8s.) against 57 in 1781.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 397, *n.* 1. If it was more numerous than in 1782 the dinner was less costly; for 80 guests at 8s. each would amount to £32, whereas in 1782 the dinner cost £42, which, at the same charge, would give 105 guests. *Ante*, ii. 250, *n.* 3.

thousand

thousand eight hundred spectators¹. Supposing the shew open ten hours, and the spectators staying one with another each an hour, the rooms never had fewer than three hundred and eighty justling against each other. Poor Lowe met some discouragement, but I interposed for him, and prevailed².

Mr. Barry's exhibition was opened the same day, and a book is published to recommend it, which, if you read it, you will find decorated with some satirical pictures of Sir Joshua Reynolds and others. I have not escaped. You must however think with some esteem of Barry for the comprehension of his design³.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ The first Exhibition was held in 1769, and was kept open for a month. The receipts at the door were just short of £700. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, i. 321. Two years later they amounted to £1125. *Ib.* i. 405.

² Lowe's picture was refused admission, but Johnson wrote to Reynolds and to Barry in his behalf, and it was admitted. It was hung however in an empty room. According to Northcote 'it was execrable beyond belief.' *Life*, iv. 201, and Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 141.

³ Barry had spent many years in decorating the great room of the Society of Arts, 'living chiefly on oatmeal porridge.' Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 179, 397. It was these decorations that he now exhibited. His book was entitled, *An account of a Series of Pictures in the Great Room of the Society of Arts, at the Adelphi*. Horace Walpole writing of it on May 11, says:—'Barry has expounded all in a book which does not want sense, though full of passion and self, and vulgarisms and vanity.' *Letters*, viii. 366. In one passage Barry praises Johnson:—'My admiration,' he writes, 'of the genius and abilities of this great master of

morality, Dr. Johnson, cannot be more than it is; but my estimation of his literary abilities is next to nothing when compared with my reverence for his consistent, manly, and well-spent life—so long a writer in such a town as London, and through many vicissitudes, without ever being betrayed into a single meanness that at this day he might be ashamed to avow.' Barry's *Works*, ed. 1809, ii. 339. The passage in which Johnson 'has not escaped' is, I believe, the following, which comes in the midst of an insolent attack on Reynolds:—'The affluence which may arise from the vogue for making portraits may by little necessary arts and industrious puffing be made to fill up for the moment the little minds of the thoughtless rabble, whether of the polite or vulgar sort, or both, and will even help to confound matters still further, and give our names a consequence with some of those dispensers of fame, the book-makers; who, however knowing in what they may have really studied, can, with a very few exceptions, hardly be considered for their knowledge of the arts as in anything differing from the mere herd.' *Ib.* p. 309. See *Life*, iv. 224.

TO

838.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], May 2, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 219.

839.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, [Thursday] May 8, 1783.

I thought your letter long in coming. I suppose it is true that I looked but languid at the exhibition, but have been worse since. Last Wednesday, the Wednesday of last week. I came home ill from Mr. Jodrel's², and after a tedious, oppressive, impatient night, sent an excuse to General Paoli, and took on Thursday two brisk catharticks and a dose of calomel. Little things do me no good. At night I was much better³. Next day cathartick again, and the third day opium for my cough. I lived without flesh all the three days⁴. The recovery was more than I expected. I went to church on Sunday quite at ease.

The exhibition prospers so much, that Sir Joshua says it will maintain the academy. He estimates the probable amount at three thousand pounds⁵. Steevens is of opinion that Croft's books will sell for near three times as much as they cost, which however is not more than might be expected.

Favour me with a direction to Musgrave of Ireland; I

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 257.

² *Ante*, ii. 133, n. 3.

³ Boswell called on Johnson on the evening of this day, and records what he said on the strangeness of there being 'so little reading in the world and so much writing.' *Life*, iv. 218.

⁴ On the last of the three days, Saturday, May 3, he dined at Mrs. Garrick's. 'Poor Johnson,' wrote Hannah More (*Memoirs*, i. 280), 'exerted himself exceedingly, but he was very ill and looked so dreadfully, that it quite grieved me. He is more

mild and complacent than he used to be. His sickness seems to have softened his mind, without having at all weakened it. I was struck with the mild radiance of this setting sun. As we all paid him the homage he both expects and deserves he was very communicative, and of course instructive and delightful in the highest degree.'

⁵ The receipts are not given for this year in Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*. The following year, 1784, they were £2444. *Ib.* ii. 441.

have

have a charitable office to propose to him. Is he Knight or Baronet¹?

My present circle of enjoyment is as narrow for me as the Circus² for Mrs. Montague. When I first settled in this neighbourhood I had Richardson and Lawrence, and Mrs. Allen at hand³. I had Mrs. Williams, then no bad companion, and Levet for a long time always to be had. If I now go out I must go far for company, and at last come back to two sick and discontented women, who can hardly talk, if they had any thing to say, and whose hatred of each other makes one great exercise of their faculties⁴.

But, with all these evils, positive and privative, my health in its present humour promises to mend, and I, in my present humour, promise to take care of it, and if we both keep our words, we may yet have a brush at the cobwebs in the sky.

Let my dear loves write to me, and do you write often yourself to,

Dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

840.

TO MR. AND MISS WILKES⁵.

May 24, 1783.

Mr. Johnson returns thanks to Mr. and Miss Wilkes for their kind invitation; but he is engaged for Tuesday to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and for Wednesday to Mr. Paradise.

¹ Sir Richard Musgrave, an Irish Baronet, who had succeeded to the title on December 2, 1782. Debrett's *New Peerage*, ed. 1820, ii. 1425. Miss Burney describes him as 'a caricature of Mr. Boswell, who is a caricature of all other of Dr. Johnson's admirers.' She gives a very amusing account of him. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 84. See *ante*, i. 399.

² The Circus at Bath, no doubt.

³ Richardson the novelist lived in Salisbury Court, now known as Salisbury Square. Mrs. Allen was, no

doubt, the wife of Johnson's landlord and next neighbour.

⁴ Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins. See *post*, p. 309, for the same melancholy complaints.

⁵ First published in Almon's *Correspondence of John Wilkes*, ed. 1805, iv. 321.

Boswell had written to Wilkes on May 21:—'Mr. Boswell's compliments to Mr. Wilkes. He rejoices to find he is so much better as to be abroad. He finds that it would not be unpleasant to Dr. Johnson to dine

841.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM WINDHAM.

London, May 31, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 227.

842.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], June 2, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 227.

843.

To —

June 2, 1783.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of Nov. 27, 1889, Lot 98 is a Letter of Johnson, one page quarto, dated June 2, 1783, 'ordering that a set of *Ramblers* should be delivered to the bearer ¹'.

844.

TO THE REVEREND DR. HAMILTON ².

REVEREND SIR,

Bolt Court, June 4, 1783.

Be pleased to excuse this application from a stranger in favour of one who has very little ability to speak for herself. The unhappy woman who waits on you with this, has been

at Mr. Wilkes's. The thing would be so curiously benignant, it were a pity it should not take place. Nobody but Mr. Boswell should be asked to meet the doctor. Mr. Boswell goes for Scotland on Friday the 30th. If then a card were sent to the doctor on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, without delay, it is to be hoped he would be fixed; and notice will be sent to Mr. Boswell.' *Ib.* p. 314.

Four days later he sent the following note:—'South Audley Street, 25th May, 1783. Mr. Boswell presents his best compliments to Mr. and Miss Wilkes: encloses Dr. Johnson's answer; and regrets much that so agreeable a meeting must be deferred till next year, as Mr. Boswell is to set out for Scotland in a few days. Hopes Mr. Wilkes will

write to him there.' *Ib.* p. 321.

It is strange that Boswell makes no mention of this invitation in the *Life*. He may have thought that it was not worthy of Johnson to be willing to visit a man so infamous as Wilkes.

¹ Perhaps Johnson had met some other old acquaintance, who, like his fellow-collegian, Oliver Edwards, 'had been told that he had written a very pretty book called *The Rambler*. "I was unwilling," said Johnson, "that he should leave the world in total darkness, and sent him a set."' *Life*, iv. 90.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 757.

Dr. Hamilton was Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields.

known

known to me many years. She is the daughter of a clergyman of Leicestershire, who by an unhappy marriage is reduced to solicit a refuge in the workhouse of your parish, to which she has a claim by her husband's settlement¹.

Her case admits of little deliberation; she is turned out of her lodging into the street. What my condition allows me to do for her I have already done, and having no friend, she can have recourse only to the parish.

I am, reverend Sir, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

845.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 5, 1783.

Why do you write so seldom? I was very glad of your letter. You were used formerly to write more, when I know not why you should [have] had much more to say. Do not please yourself with showing me that you can forget me, who do not forget you.

Mr. Desmoulins' account of my health rather wants confirmation. But complaints are useless.

I have, by the migration of one of my ladies, more peace at home; but I remember an old savage chief that says of the Romans with great indignation—*ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*³.

Mr. — was not calamity, it was his sister, to whom I am afraid the term is now strictly applicable, for she seems to have fallen some way into obscurity; I am afraid by a palsy⁴.

¹ The law of settlement is the law which determines the parish to which a pauper belongs, where he has the right to be maintained, and which gives the power of removing him to it. *Penny Cyclo.*, ed. 1840, xviii. 400. 'A new settlement may be acquired several ways, as by marriage. For a woman, marrying a man that is settled in another parish, changes her own settlement.' Blackstone's

Commentaries, ed. 1775, i. 363.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 259.

³ It was Mrs. Desmoulins who had gone away. *Life*, iv. 233. The quotation is from *The Agricola* of Tacitus, c. xxx.

⁴ Johnson, *post*, p. 310, refers to 'new calamities,' and mentions a lady left 'very slenderly supplied.' It is possible that this letter is misplaced by Mrs. Piozzi.

Whence

Whence your pity arises for the thief that has made the hangman idle, I cannot discover. I am sorry indeed for every suicide, but I suppose he would have gone to the gallows without being lamented¹.

You will soon see that Miss H——, if she finds countenance, and gets scholars, will conquer her vexations. Is not Susy likewise one of her pupils? I owe Susy a letter, which I purpose to pay next time.

I can tell you of no new thing in town, but Dr. Maxwell², whose lady is by ill health detained with two little babies at Bath.

You give a cheerful account of your way of life. I hope you will settle into tranquillity.

When I can repay you such a narrative of my felicity, you shall see description.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

846.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 13, 1783.

Yesterday were brought hither two parcels directed *to Mrs. Thrale, to the care of Dr. Johnson*. By what the touch can discover, they contain something of which cloaths are made; and I suspect them to be Musgrave's⁴ long-expected present. You will order them to be called for, or let me know whither I shall send them.

Crutchley has had the gout, but is abroad again. Seward called on me yesterday. He is going only for a few weeks; first to Paris, and then to Flanders, to contemplate the pictures of

¹ It is possible, though not likely, that Johnson refers to Powell, the Cashier in the Army Pay Office, in whose accounts a great deficiency had been discovered. He cut his throat towards the end of May. It does not seem likely that he would have been tried on a capital charge. His accomplice Bembridge was sen-

tenced to pay a fine of £2,600, and to be imprisoned for six months. Walpole's *Letters*, viii. 371, and *Ann. Reg.*, 1783, i. 221.

² Perhaps his friend the Rev. Dr. Maxwell, who supplied Boswell with some *Collectanea*. *Life*, ii. 116.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 262.

⁴ The Irish baronet. *Ante*, ii. 294.

Claude

Claude Lorraine ; and he asked me if that was not as good a way as any of spending time—that time which returns no more—of which however a great part seems to be very foolishly spent, even by the wisest and the best¹.

That time at least is not lost in which the evils of life are relieved, and therefore the moments which you bestow on Miss H—— are properly employed. She seems to make an uncommon impression upon you. What has she done or suffered out of the common course of things? I love a little secret history.

Poor Dr. Lawrence and his youngest son died almost on the same day².

Mrs. Dobson, the directress of rational conversation, did not translate Petrarch, but epitomised a very bulky French Life of Petrarch. She translated, I think, the Memoirs of D'Aubigné³.

Your last letter was very pleasing ; it expressed kindness to me, and some degree of placid acquiescence in your present mode of life, which is, I think, the best which is at present within your reach.

My powers and attention have for a long time been almost wholly employed upon my health, I hope not wholly without success, but solitude is very tedious.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Of Johnson's opinion of art see *Life*, i. 363, n. 3.

² According to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 542, Dr. Lawrence died at Canterbury on June 13, his second son died on the 15th. But, if we may trust Munk's *Roll of the College of Physicians*, ii. 153, on the father's tomb-stone June 6 is given as the day of his death. If he died on June 13 or his son on the 15th Johnson's letter must be misdated.

³ Susanna Dobson's *Life of Petrarch* was reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1775, pp. 186, 240. Miss Burney in 1780 describes

this lady as 'exhausting her store of compliments on her, and then quitting her to go and give another dose of flummery to Mrs. Thrale.' She boasted that 'she had made £400 of her *Petrarca*.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, i. 352. An anonymous *Life of D'Aubigné* is reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1772, p. 281. She was the wife of Dr. Matthew Dobson, a Liverpool physician. Mrs. Thrale says that during this visit to Bath 'Dr. Dobson from Liverpool' was one of her 'medical advisers.' ... Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 272.

847.

TO EDMUND ALLEN.

[London], June 17, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 228.

848.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR.

[London], June 17, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 228.

849.

TO THOMAS DAVIES.

[London], June 18, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 231.

850.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM, Bolt-court, Fleet-street, June 19, 1783.

I am sitting down in no cheerful solitude to write a narrative which would once have affected you with tenderness and sorrow, but which you will perhaps pass over now with the careless glance of frigid indifference. For this diminution of regard however, I know not whether I ought to blame you, who may have reasons which I cannot know, and I do not blame myself, who have for a great part of human life done you what good I could, and have never done you evil.

I had been disordered in the usual way, and had been relieved by the usual methods, by opium and catharticks, but had rather lessened my dose of opium.

On Monday the 16th I sat for my picture², and walked a considerable way with little inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life³. Thus I went to bed, and in a short time waked and sat

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 268.

The greater part of this Letter is given by Boswell in the *Life*, iv. 229. There too are given other letters in which Johnson describes the stroke of palsy which came upon him in the morning of June 17.

² No doubt to Miss Reynolds. *Post*, p. 327.

³ On his birthday in 1764 he recorded in his Diary:—‘I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing.’ *Pr. and Med.*, p. 58. *Ante*, i. 250, n. 4.

up, as has been long my custom, when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted I suppose about half a minute; I was alarmed, and prayed God, that however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse¹. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

Soon after I perceived that I had suffered a paralytick stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful state, that I wondered at my own apathy, and considered that perhaps death itself when it should come would excite less horror than seems now to attend it.

/ In order to rouse the vocal organs I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and I think repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and, strange as it may seem, I think, slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech he left me my hand, I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence², who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands.

I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen³, that I might have a discreet friend at hand to act as occasion should require. In penning this note I had some difficulty, my hand, I knew not how nor why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor⁴ to come to me,

¹ 'Nocte, inter 16 et 17 Junii, 1783.
Summe pater, quodcunque tuum de
corpore Numen

Hoc statuatur, precibus Christus
adesse velit:

Ingenio parcas, nec sit mihi culpa
rogasse,

Qua solum potero parte placere
tibi.'

Works, i. 159.

² The palsy had deprived Dr. Lawrence of the power of writing some time before his death. *Life*, iv. 144, *n.* 3.

³ His landlord and next neighbour. See *Life*, iv. 228, for the letter.

⁴ This is one of the very few letters which Taylor allowed Boswell to publish. *Ib.* The following exact reprint of it is given by Professor

and

and bring Dr. Heberden, and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour¹. My physicians are very friendly and very disinterested, and give me great hopes, but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers, as to repeat the Lord's Prayer with no very imperfect articulation. My memory, I hope, yet remains as it was; but such an attack produces solicitude for the safety of every faculty.

How this will be received by you I know not. I hope you will sympathise with me; but perhaps

My mistress gracious, mild, and good,
Cries! Is he dumb? 'Tis time he should².

But can this be possible? I hope it cannot. I hope that what,

Mayor in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 481. 'The repetitions betray,' he says, 'the writer's agitation':—

DEAR SIR,—It has pleased God by a paralytick stroke in the night to deprive me of speech.

I am very desirous of Dr Heberden[s] assistance as I think my case is not past remedy. Let me see you as soon as it is possible. Bring Dr Heberden with you if you can, but come yourself, at all events. I am glad you are so well, when when [sic] I am so dreadfully attacked.

I think that by a speedy application of stimulants much may be done. I question if a [sic] vomit vigorous and rough would not rouse the organs of speech to action.

As it is too early to send I will try to recollect what I can that can be suspected to have brough[t] on this dreadful distress.

I have been accustomed to bleed frequently for an asthmatick complaint, but have forbore for some time by Dr Pepys's persuasion, who perceived my legs beginning to swell.

I sometimes alleviate a painful, or more properly an oppressive constriction of my chest by opiates, and have

lately taken opium frequently, but the last, or two last times in smaller quantities. My largest dose is three grains, and last night I took but two.

You will suggest these thing[s], and they are all that I can call to mind, to Dr Heberden.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

June 17, 1783.

Dr Brocklesby will be with me to meet Dr Heberden, and I shall have previously make master of the case as well as I can.

To the Rev^d Dr Taylor.

¹ In the British Museum in the Crace Collection, xi. 60, is a picture of 'Dr. Heberden's house on the south side of Pall Mall; the only freehold in Pall Mall, the site of the house given to Nell Gwynne by King Charles II.' Brocklesby in 1788, and probably at this time too, was living in Norfolk Street, Strand. Burke's *Correspondence*, iii. 78.

² 'The queen so gracious, mild, and good

Cries, "Is he gone? 'tis time he should."

On the Death of Dr. Swift. Swift's *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 245.

when

when I could speak, I spoke of you, and to you, will be in a sober and serious hour remembered by you¹; and surely it cannot be remembered but with some degree of kindness. I have loved you with virtuous affection; I have honoured you with sincere esteem. Let not all our endearments be forgotten, but let me have in this great distress your pity and your prayers. You see I yet turn to you with my complaints as a settled and unalienable friend; do not, do not drive me from you, for I have not deserved either neglect or hatred.

To the girls, who do not write often, for Susy has written only once, and Miss Thrale² owes me a letter, I earnestly recommend, as their guardian and friend, that they remember their Creator in the days of their youth³.

I suppose you may wish to know how my disease is treated by the physicians. They put a blister upon my back, and two from my ear to my throat, one on a side. The blister on the back has done little, and those on the throat have not risen. I bullied and bounced, (it sticks to our last sand⁴) and compelled the apothecary to make his salve according to the Edinburgh Dispensatory⁵, that it might adhere better. I have two on now of my own prescription. They likewise give me salt of hartshorn, which I take with no great confidence, but am satisfied that what can be done is done for me.

O God! give me comfort and confidence in Thee: forgive my sins; and if it be Thy good pleasure, relieve my diseases for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

I am almost ashamed of this querulous letter, but now it is written, let it go.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 292, n. 3.

² He does not call her Queeney.

³ *Ecclesiastes*, xii. 1.

⁴ Johnson says that his old habit of bullying and bouncing will stick to him till the last sand is running out. 'It sticks to our last sand' is a quotation from Pope's *Moral Essays*, i. 224:—

'Time that on all things lays his lenient hand

Yet tames not this; it sticks to our last sand.'

⁵ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1747, p. 548, is advertised *The Edinburgh Pharmacopæia*, edited by W. Lewis, M.B.

851.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST MADAM,

London, June 20, 1783.

I think to send you for some time a regular diary. You will forgive the gross images which disease must necessarily present. Dr. Lawrence said, that medical treatises should be always in Latin².

The two vesicatories³ which I procured with so much trouble did not perform well, for, being applied to the lower part of the fauces, a part always in motion, their adhesion was continually broken. The back, I hear, is very properly flayed.

I have now healing application to the cheeks, and have my head covered with one formidable diffusion of cantharides⁴, from which Dr. Heberden assures me that experience promises great effects. He told me likewise, that my utterance has been improved since yesterday, of which, however, I was less certain; though doubtless they who see me at intervals can best judge.

I never had any distortion of the countenance, but what Dr. Brocklesby called a little prolapsus, which went away the second day.

I was this day directed to eat flesh, and I dined very copiously upon roasted lamb and boiled pease: I then went to sleep in a chair, and when I waked, I found Dr. Brocklesby sitting by me, and fell to talking with him in such a manner as made me glad, and, I hope, made me thankful. The Doctor fell to repeating Juvenal's ninth satire; but I let him see that the province was mine⁵.

I am to take wine to-night, and hope it will do me good.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 273.

² Mrs. Thrale, if I understand one of her letters rightly, was not too nice to make a coarse medical joke to Dr. Lawrence. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 123.

³ 'Vesicatory. A blistering medicine.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

⁴ 'Cantharides. Spanish flies used

to raise blisters.' *Ib.*

⁵ Eighteen months later Dr. Brocklesby, when attending Johnson on his death-bed, and talking on the subject of prayer, 'repeated from Juvenal,—

"*Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano,*"

and so on to the end of the tenth

852.

TO MAURITIUS LOWE¹.

SIR,

Friday, June 20, 1783.

You know, I suppose, that a sudden illness makes it impracticable to me to wait on Mr. Barry, and the time is short. If it be your opinion that the end can be obtained by writing, I am very willing to write, and, perhaps, it may do as well; it is, at least, all that can be expected at present from.

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

If you would have me write, come to me: I order your admission.

853.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 21, 1783.

I continue my journal. When I went to bed last night, I found the new covering of my head uneasy, not painful, rather too warm. I had however a comfortable and placid night. My physicians this morning thought my amendment not inconsiderable; and my friends who visited me said, that my look was spritely and cheerful. Nobody has shown more affection than Paradise³. Langton⁴ and he were with me a long time to-day. I was almost tired.

satire; but in running it quickly over, he happened, in the line,

"*Qui spatium vite extremum inter munera ponat,*"

to pronounce *supremum* for *extremum*; at which Johnson's critical ear instantly took offence, and discoursing vehemently on the unmetrical effect of such a lapse, he shewed himself as full as ever of the spirit of the grammarian.⁵ *Life*, iv. 401.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 735.

For Mauritius Lowe see *ante*,

VOL. II.

ii. 66, 293, and for James Barry *ante*, ii. 293. Johnson in the midst of his own troubles does not forget his poor friend.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 275.

³ Johnson in a letter to him written on October 20, 1784, speaks of his great and constant kindness to him. *Life*, iv. 364.

⁴ Langton the following spring 'took a little lodging in Fleet Street in order to be near, to devote himself to Dr. Johnson.' Hannah More's *Memoirs*, i. 310.

X

When

When my friends were gone I took another liberal dinner, such as my physicians recommended, and slept after it, but without such evident advantage as was the effect of yesterday's *siesta*. Perhaps the sleep was not quite so sound, for I am harassed by a very disagreeable operation of the cantharides, which I am endeavouring to control by copious dilution.

My disorders are in other respects less than usual; my disease, whatever it was, seems collected into this one dreadful effect. My breath is free; the constrictions of the chest are suspended, and my nights pass without oppression.

To-day I received a letter of consolation and encouragement from an unknown hand, without a name, kindly and piously, though not enthusiastically written¹.

I had just now from Mr. Pepys a message, enquiring in your name after my health, of this I can give no account².

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

854.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 23, 1783.

I thank you for your kind letter, and will continue my diary. On the night of the 21st I had very little rest, being kept awake by an effect of the cantharides, not indeed formidable, but very tiresome and painful. On the 22d the physicians released

¹ Johnson, I think, uses *enthusiastically* in the sense in which he defines *enthusiasm* in his *Dictionary*:—‘A vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication.’ He quotes from Locke:—‘Enthusiasm is founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rises from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain.’ Hawkins tells how after Johnson’s death he found among his papers another letter ‘from an unknown hand’ not of consolation but reproof. It pointed out ‘his evil habits in con-

versation, which made his acquaintance shunned. It was such a letter as many a one, on the receipt of it, would have destroyed. On the contrary Johnson placed it in his bureau in a situation so obvious that it might look him in the face.’ Hawkins’s *Johnson*, p. 601, note.

² He cannot, that is to say, understand why Mr. Pepys who was in London should make such an enquiry in the name of Mrs. Thrale who was in Bath and in constant correspondence with him.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 277.

me from the salts of hartshorn. The cantharides continued their persecution, but I was set free from it at night. I had however not much sleep, but I hope for more to-night. The vesications on my back and face are healing, and only that on my head continues to operate.

My friends tell me that my power of utterance improves daily, and Dr. Heberden declares that he hopes to find me almost well to-morrow.

Palsies are more common than I thought. I have been visited by four friends who have had each a stroke, and one of them two.

Your offer, dear Madam, of coming to me, is charmingly kind; but I will lay up for future use, and then let it not be considered as obsolete; a time of dereliction¹ may come, when I may have hardly any other friend, but in the present exigency I cannot name one who has been deficient in civility or attention. What man can do for man has been done for me. Write to me very often

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

855.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

The journal now, like other journals, grows very *dry*, as it is not diversified either by operations or events. Less and less is done, and, I thank God, less and less is suffered every day. The physicians seem to think that little more needs to be done. I find that they consulted to-day about sending me to Bath, and thought it needless. Dr. Heberden takes leave to-morrow.

This day I watered the garden³, and did not find the watering-pots more heavy than they have hitherto been, and my breath is more free.

¹ *Dereliction* Johnson defines as 'an utter forsaking or leaving; an abandoning.'

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 278.

³ *Ante*, ii. 193.

Poor dear —— has just been here with a present¹. If it ever falls in your way to do him good, let him have your favour.

Both Queeney's letter and yours gave me to-day great pleasure. Think as well and as kindly of me as you can, but do not flatter me². Cool reciprocations of esteem are the great comforts of life; hyperbolical praise only corrupts the tongue of the one, and the ear of the other.

I am, &c.,

London, June 24, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

Your letter has no date.

856.

TO MRS. PORTER³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 25, 1783.

Since the papers have given an account of my illness, it is proper that I should give my friends some account of it myself.

Very early in the morning of the 16th⁴ of this month I perceived my speech taken from me. When it was light I sat down and wrote such directions as appeared proper. Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby were called. Blisters were applied, and medicines given. Before night I began to speak with some freedom, which has been increasing ever since, so that I have now very little impediment in my utterance. Dr. Heberden took his leave this morning⁵.

Since I received this stroke I have in other respects been better than I was before, and hope yet to have a comfortable summer. Let me have your prayers.

¹ Perhaps Tom Davies the bankrupt bookseller. *Ante*, ii. 64. Johnson writing to him on the 18th said that he was 'strongly affected by Mrs. Davies's tenderness.' *Life*, iv. 231. When he was dying Davies sent him a present of pork. *Ib.* iv. 413, n. 2. The poor fellow may have hoped to find a place in Johnson's will.

² It was in vain that Johnson had protested against her habit of flattery. *Ante*, i. 220-1, 313, 329.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 736.

⁴ It was not on the 16th, but very early in the morning of the 17th that he was attacked.

⁵ Hawkins found the following note in Johnson's Diary:—

'June 16. I went to bed, and, as I conceive, about 3 in the morning, I had a stroke of the palsy.

„ 17. I sent for Dr. Heberden and Dr. Brocklesby. God bless them.

„ 25. Dr. Heberden took leave.'

Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 558.

If writing is not troublesome, let me know whether you are pretty well, and how you have passed the winter and spring.

Make my compliments to all my friends.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

857.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAREST MADAM,

London, June 28, 1783.

Your letter is just such as I desire, and as from you I hope always to deserve.

The black dog I hope always to resist, and in time to drive, though I am deprived of almost all those that used to help me². The neighbourhood is impoverished. I had once Richardson and Lawrence in my reach. Mrs. Allen is dead. My house has lost Levet, a man who took interest in every thing, and therefore ready at conversation³. Mrs. Williams is so weak that she can be a companion no longer. When I rise my breakfast is solitary, the black dog waits to share it, from breakfast to dinner he continues barking, except that Dr. Brocklesby for a little keeps him at a distance. Dinner with a sick woman you may venture to suppose not much better than solitary⁴. After dinner, what remains but to count the clock, and hope for that sleep which I can scarce expect. Night comes at last, and some hours of restlessness and confusion bring me again to a day of solitude. What shall exclude the black dog from an habitation like this?

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 280.

² For 'the black dog' see *ante*, ii. 73. It was Mrs. Thrale and her husband who had saved him from his severest fit of depression nearly twenty years earlier. *Ante*, i. 332, *n. 1*.

³ Johnson alone knew of his merits as a converser, for 'he seldom said a word while any company was present.' *Life*, i. 243. See *ante*, ii. 295.

⁴ A week later he wrote to Mrs. Porter:—'I live now but in a melan-

choly way. My old friend Mr. Levet is dead, who lived with me in the house, and was useful and companionable; Mrs. Desmoulins is gone away; and Mrs. Williams is so much decayed, that she can add little to another's gratifications. The world passes away, and we are passing with it; but there is, doubtless, another world, which will endure for ever. Let us all fit ourselves for it.' *Ib.* iv. 233.

If

If I were a little richer, I would perhaps take some cheerful female into the house.

Your Bath news shews me new calamities. I am afraid Mrs. L——s¹ is left with a numerous family, very slenderly supplied. Mrs. Sheward is an old maid, I am afraid, yet *sur le pavé*².

——, if he were well, would be well enough liked; his daughter has powers and knowledge, but no art of making them agreeable.

I must touch my journal. Last night fresh flies were put to my head, and hindered me from sleeping. To-day I fancy myself incommoded by heat.

I have, however, watered the garden both yesterday and to-day, just as I watered the laurels in the island³.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

858.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

[June 30, 1783.]

Among those that have enquired after me, Sir Philip⁵ is one; and Dr. Burney was one of those who came to see me⁶. I have had no reason to complain of indifference or neglect. Dick Burney is come home five inches taller⁷.

¹ John Lewis, Dean of Ossory, who had married Johnson's friend Charlotte Cotterel (*Life*, i. 382), died on June 28. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 628.

² 'Être sur le pavé, n'avoir point de domicile, et fig. n'avoir point de condition, d'emploi.' *Littre*.

³ In an island no doubt in the pool which Mr. Thrale dug at Streatham. *Ante*, i. 360. Susan Burney, describing her visit to the Thrales in 1779, says:—'We stroll'd about the sweet plantations, and saw the summer-house, and Dick's island.' *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 259.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 282.

Mrs. Piozzi does not give the date of this letter. Johnson says, 'yester-

day I went to church.' His letter to Boswell shows that it was on Sunday that he went to church. *Life*, iv. 232. Sunday was the 29th.

⁵ Sir Philip Jennings Clerk. *Ante*, ii. 142.

⁶ Miss Burney records in her Journal on June 19, that hearing of Johnson's illness she and her father went instantly to his house. 'He had earnestly desired me, when we lived so much together at Streatham, to see him frequently if he should be ill. He saw my father; but he had medical people with him, and could not admit me upstairs, but he sent me down a most kind message.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 269.

⁷ He was the boy whom Johnson Yesterday

Yesterday in the evening I went to church, and have been to-day to see the great burning glass, which does more than was ever done before by the transmission of the rays, but is not equal in power to those which reflect them. It wastes a diamond placed in the focus, but causes no diminution of pure gold. Of the rubies exposed to its action, one was made more vivid, the other paler¹. To see the glass, I climbed up stairs to the garret, and then up a ladder to the leads, and talked to the artist rather too long; for my voice, though clear and distinct for a little while, soon tires and falters. The organs of speech are yet very feeble, but will I hope be by the mercy of God finally restored: at present, like any other weak limb, they can endure but little labour at once. Would you not have been very sorry for me when I could scarcely speak?

Fresh cantharides were this morning applied to my head, and are to be continued some time longer. If they play me no treacherous tricks, they give me very little pain.

Let me have your kindness and your prayers; and think on me, as on a man who, for a very great portion of your life, has done you all the good he could, and desires still to be considered,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

859.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAREST MADAM,

London, July 1, 1783.

This morning I took the air by a ride to Hampstead³, and

five years or so earlier had accompanied when he first went to Winchester School. *Life*, iii. 367, and *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 284.

¹ In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for 1774, p. 220, an account is given of 'experiments tried with Mr. Villette's burning-glass in 1718. A diamond lost seven-eighths of its weight.'

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 284.

³ Hampstead, which is now joined to London by an unbroken line of houses, is described in 1761 as 'a pleasant village situated near the top of a hill about four miles on the north-west side of London. On the summit of this hill is a heath, which is adorned with many gentlemen's houses.' *Dodsley's London and its Environs*, iii. 134. It was here that

this

this afternoon I dined with the club¹. But fresh cantharides were this day applied to my head.

Mr. Cator called on me to-day, and told that he had invited you back to Streatham. I shewed the unfitness of your return thither, till the neighbourhood should have lost its habits of depredation², and he seemed to be satisfied. He invited me very kindly and cordially to try the air of Beckenham, and pleased me very much by his affectionate attention to Miss Vezy. There is much good in his character, and much usefulness in his knowledge³.

Queeney seems now to have forgotten me. Of the different appearance of the hills and vallies an account may perhaps be given, without the supposition of any prodigy. If she had been out and the evening was breezy, the exhalations would rise from the low grounds very copiously; and the wind that swept and

Johnson in 1749 had brought his sick wife for change of air, and it was here that he had written most, if not the whole, of his *Vanity of Human Wishes*. *Life*, i. 192.

¹ Miss Burney records:—‘I had the satisfaction to hear from Sir Joshua that Dr. Johnson had dined with him at the Club. I called the next morning to congratulate him, and found him very gay and very good-humoured.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, ii. 271. In her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 345, she adds that she offered to make his tea. He had given her his own large arm-chair which was too heavy for her to move to the table. “‘Sir,” quoth she, “I am in the wrong chair.” “It is so difficult,” cried he with quickness, “for anything to be wrong that belongs to you, that it can only be I that am in the wrong chair to keep you from the right one.”’ He kept her for two hours, and ‘endeavoured most earnestly to engage her to stay and dine with him and Mrs. Williams.’

² For Mr. Cator, one of Mr. Thrale’s executors, see *ante*, ii. 128, *n.* 4.

The ‘habits of depredation’ were testified to by the capital convictions. At the Surrey Summer Assizes nine men were sentenced to death for robberies, and at the Old Bailey ‘a very long and fatiguing session’ was brought to a close on August 2 by the same sentence passed on twelve robbers. *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1783, p. 710. Horace Walpole, writing on June 20, says that some young ladies who were visiting Strawberry Hill, on evening coming on, ‘were seized with a panic of highwaymen, and wanted to go. I laughed and said, I believed there was no danger, for that I had not been robbed these two years. However I was not quite in the right; they were stopped in Knightsbridge by two footpads.’ *Letters*, viii. 381.

³ Boswell quotes this praise of Cator and adds:—‘Dr. Johnson found a cordial solace at that gentleman’s seat at Beckenham, in Kent, which is indeed one of the finest places at which I ever was a guest; and where I find more and more a hospitable welcome.’ *Life*, iv. 313.

cleared

cleared the hills, would only by its cold condense the vapours of the sheltered vallies¹.

Murphy is just gone from me ; he visits me very kindly, and I have no unkindness to complain of².

I am sorry that Sir Philip's³ request was not treated with more respect, nor can I imagine what has put them so much out of humour : I hope their business is prosperous.

I hope that I recover by degrees, but my nights are restless ; and you will suppose the nervous system to be somewhat enfeebled.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

860.

TO MRS. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 3, 1783.

Dr. Brocklesby yesterday dismissed the cantharides, and I can now find a soft place upon my pillow. Last night was cool, and I rested well, and this morning I have been a friend at a poetical difficulty⁵. Here is now a glimpse of day-light again ; but how near is the evening—none can tell, and I will not prognosticate ; we all know that from none of us it can be far distant ; may none of us know this in vain !

I went, as I took care to boast, on Tuesday, to the club⁶, and

¹ See *post*, p. 320, n. 1.

² Murphy says that he found him reading Dr. Watson's *Chymistry*. 'Articulating with difficulty he said :—"From this book he who knows nothing may learn a great deal, and he who knows will be pleased to find his knowledge recalled to his mind in a manner highly pleasing."' Murphy's *Life of Johnson*, p. 121.

³ Sir Philip Jennings Clerk.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 286.

⁵ Perhaps some author had sought his aid. 'I used once,' he said, 'to be sadly plagued with a man who

wrote verses, but who literally had no other notion of a verse, but that it consisted of ten syllables. *Lay your knife and your fork, across your plate*, was to him a verse :

Lay yōur knife ānd your fōrk, acrōss
your plāte.

As he wrote a great number of verses, he sometimes by chance made good ones, though he did not know it. *Life*, ii. 51.

⁶ At this meeting of the Club the father of Lord Palmerston, the prime-minister, was proposed, and against Johnson's opinion was rejected. *ib.* iv. 232.

hear that I was thought to have performed as well as usual. I dined on fish, with the wing of a small Turkey chick, and left roast beef, goose, and venison pye untouched. I live much on peas, and never had them so good, for so long a time, in any year that I can remember.

When do you go to Weymouth? and why do you go? only I suppose to a new place, and the reason is sufficient to those who have no reason to withhold them.

* * * * knows well enough how to live on four hundred a year, but where is he to have it? Had * * * * any thing of his own unsettled?

I am glad that Mrs. Sheward talks of me, and loves me, and have in this still scene of life great comfort in reflecting that I have given very few reason to hate me¹: I hope scarcely any man has known me closely but for his benefit, or cursorily but to his innocent entertainment. Tell me, you that know me best, whether this be true, that according to your answer I may continue my practice, or try to mend it.

Along with your kind letter yesterday came one likewise very kind from the Astons at Lichfield; but I do not know whether, as the summer is so far advanced, I shall travel so far, though I am not without hopes that frequent change of air may fortify me against the winter, which has been, in modern phrase, of late years very *inimical*² to,

Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

861.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, July 3, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 231.

¹ Johnson, who had seen Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, might have thought differently had his eye fallen on the passage where the writer says:—'Men are much more unwilling to have their weaknesses and their imperfections known than their crimes; and if you hint to a man that you think him silly, ignorant, or even ill-bred, or awkward, he will

hate you more and longer than if you tell him plainly that you think him a rogue.' Vol. ii. p. 58. See the *Life*, iv. 280, for the comical scene when Langton pointed out to Johnson that he thought him deficient in Christian charity, and Johnson 'belaboured his confessor.'

² *Inimical* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

TO

862.

TO MRS. PORTER.

London, July 5, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 232.

863.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 5, 1783.

That Dr. * * * ² is offended I am very sorry, but if the same state of things should recur, I could not do better. Dr. Brocklesby is, you know, my neighbour, and could be ready at call; he had for some time very diligently solicited my friendship: I depended much upon the skill of Dr. Heberden, and him I had seen lately at Brocklesby's. Heberden I could not bear to miss, Brocklesby could not decently be missed, and to call three, had made me ridiculous by the appearance of self-importance. Mine was one of those unhappy cases in which something must be wrong. I can only be sorry.

I have now no Doctor, but am left to shift for myself as opportunity shall serve. I am going next week with * * * to * * * ³, where I expect not to stay long. Eight children in a small house will probably make a chorus not very diverting. My purpose is to change the air frequently this summer.

Of the imitation of my stile, in a criticism on Gray's Churchyard, I forgot to make mention. The author is, I believe, utterly unknown, for Mr. Steevens cannot hunt him out⁴. I know little of it, for though it was sent me I never cut the leaves open. I had a letter with it representing it to me as my own work; in

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 288.² Probably either Pepys or Jebb.³ With Langton to Rochester. *Ante*, ii. 164, *n.* 2, and *post*, p. 317.⁴ The book was entitled *A Criticism on Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, and the author was John Young, a Glasgow Professor. *Life*, iv. 392. Mme. D'Arblay describes him as 'a man whose learning sits upon him far lighter than Mr.Broome's [her new brother-in-law]. He has as much native humour as he has acquired erudition; he has a face that looks all honesty and kindness, and manners gentle and humble. I had expected a sharp, though amusing, satirist, from his very comic but sarcastic imitation of Dr. Johnson's *Lives*.⁵ Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, vi. 194.

such

such an account to the publick there may be humour, but to myself it was neither serious nor comical. I suspect the writer to be wrongheaded; as to the noise which it makes I have never heard it, and am inclined to believe that few attacks either of ridicule or invective make much noise, but by the help of those that they provoke¹.

I think Queeney's silence has something either of laziness or unkindness; and I wish her free from both, for both are very unamiable, and will both increase by indulgence. Susy is I believe at a loss for matter. I shall be glad to see pretty Sophy's production.

I hope I still continue mending. My organs are yet feeble.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

864.

TO MISS SUSANNA THRALE².

DEAREST MISS SUSY,

[About July 5, 1783.]

When you favoured me with your letter, you seemed to be in want of materials to fill it, having met with no great adventures either of peril or delight, nor done or suffered any thing out of the common course of life.

When you have lived longer, and considered more, you will find the common course of life very fertile of observation and reflection. Upon the common course of life must our thoughts and our conversation be generally employed. Our general course of life must denominate us wise or foolish; happy or miserable: if it is well regulated we pass on prosperously and smoothly; as it is neglected we live in embarrassment, perplexity, and uneasiness.

Your time, my love, passes, I suppose, in devotion, reading, work, and company. Of your devotions, in which I earnestly advise you to be very punctual, you may not perhaps think it proper to give me an account; and of work, unless I understood

¹ See *Life*, ii. 61, *n.* 4, for parallel passages from Johnson and other authors.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 290.

For Susanna Thrale see *ante*, i. 354; ii. 44.

it better, it will be of no great use to say much; but books and company will always supply you with materials for your letters to me, as I shall always be pleased to know what you are reading, and with what you are pleased; and shall take great delight in knowing what impression new modes or new characters make upon you, and to observe with what attention you distinguish the tempers, dispositions, and abilities of your companions.

A letter may be always made out of the books of the morning or talk of the evening; and any letters from you, my dearest, will be welcome to

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

865.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 8, 1783.

Time makes great changes of opinion. * * * * ran perpetually after — in the lifetime of that lady, to whom he so earnestly desired to be reunited in the grave. I am glad —² is not left in poverty, her disease seems to threaten her with a full share of misery.

Of Miss H——³, whom you charge me with forgetting, I know not why I should much foster the remembrance, for I can do her no good; but I honestly recommend her to your pity; for nothing but the opportunity of emptying her bosom with confidence can save her from madness. To know at least one mind so disordered is not without its use; it shows the danger of admitting passively the first irruption of irregular imaginations.

Langton and I have talked of passing a little time at Rochester together, till neither knows well how to refuse, though I think he is not eager to take me, and I am not desirous to be taken⁴. His family is numerous, and his house little. I have

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 292.

² Probably Mrs. L——s mentioned *ante*, ii. 310.

³ *Ante*, ii. 298.

⁴ For Johnson's visit to Rochester see *Life*, iv. 8, 22, 233. Miss Burney

recorded this month*:—'Mr. Cambridge asked after Dr. Johnson's health. "He is very much recovered," I answered, "and out of town at Mr. Langton's. And there I hope he will entertain him with enough of Greek."

* The entry is misdated 'Feb. 23.' It was certainly written in July.

let him know, for his relief, that I do not mean to burden him more than a week. He is however among those who wish me well, and would exert what power he has to do me good.

I think you will do well in going to Weymouth, for though it be nothing, it is, at least to the young ones, a new nothing, and they will be able always to tell that they have seen Weymouth¹. I am for the present willing enough to persuade myself, that a short succession of trifles may contribute to my re-establishment, but hope to return, for it is surely time, to something of importance.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

866.

To —.

July 11, 1783.

In Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's Auction Catalogue of July 16, 1866, Lot 275 is an autograph of Johnson:—"Note on a card, July 11, 1783."

867.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN².

SIR,

I have enclosed the receipt; and a letter to Mrs. Williams³ which you [will] do me the favour of sending to her.

"Yes," said Mr. Cambridge, "and make his son repeat the Hebrew alphabet to him." Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 260. Johnson complained that 'Langton had his children too much about him.' *Life*, iii. 128.

¹ It was six years later that by the visit of George III and his Court Weymouth became famous. Miss Burney has described 'the band of music concealed in a neighbouring bathing-machine, which the moment he popped his royal head under water struck up *God save great Great George our King*.' She has told us too of the Mayor who refused to kneel when the Queen offered her hand for him to kiss. "You should have knelt, Sir," said Colonel Gwynn. "Sir," answered the poor Mayor, "I cannot." "Everybody does, Sir." "Sir,—I have a wooden leg."

It was here that the Queen read aloud to Miss Burney Mrs. Piozzi's *Journey*. Here Mrs. Gwynn, the younger of the Miss Hornecks (*ante*, i. 344), 'talked over with Miss Burney anecdotes of their former acquaintances — Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mrs. Thrale, Baretta, and her old admirer, Dr. Goldsmith, of whom she relates—as who does not? a thousand ridiculous traits.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, v. 36. If only Miss Burney had been as careful in recording these anecdotes, as she always was with the compliments paid to her as an author, how grateful should we have been.

² From the original in the possession of Mr. John Graham, of the Scottish Club, Dover Street.

³ Perhaps Johnson had received a further payment for his *Journey to*

The

The house where I am, is very airy, and pleasant, and over-looks the Medway where the channel is very broad, so that I hardly imagine a habitation more likely to promote health, nor have I much reason to complain; My general health is better than it has been for some years—My breath is more free, and my nights are less disturbed. But my utterance is still impeded, and my voice soon grows weary with long sentences. This, I hope, time will remedy. I hope dear Mrs. Strahan continues well.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

Rochester, July 15, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To William Strahan, Esq., M.P., London.

868.

TO MISS WILLIAMS.

Rochester, July 15, 1783. Mentioned in the last Letter.

869.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 23, 1783.

I have been thirteen days at Rochester, and am just now returned. I came back by water in a common boat twenty miles for a shilling, and when I landed at Billingsgate I carried my budget myself to Cornhill before I could get a coach, and was not much incommoded².

the Hebrides. The Letter to Mrs. Williams has not, I fear, been preserved.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 294.

² Johnson had taken boat at Gravesend. In Dodsley's *London and its Environs*, 1761, iii. 55, vi. 266, it is stated that 'the Watermen's Company are by act of parliament obliged to provide officers at Billingsgate and at Gravesend, who, at every time of high water by night and day, are at their respective places to ring publicly a bell for fifteen minutes, to give notice to the tilt boats and wherries to put off; and coaches ply

at Gravesend at the landing of people from London to carry them to Rochester.' At Gravesend surely the bell was rung at low tide, so that the boat might be carried up on the flow. By the tilt-boat which carried forty passengers the fare was nine-pence; by the wherry which carried only ten, a shilling. From Billingsgate the most convenient way for Johnson would have been to take a sculling-boat to the Temple Stairs, but doubtless the state of the tide rendered it impossible or at least dangerous to pass under London Bridge, where there often was a fall of five feet.

I have

I have had Miss Susy's and Miss Sophy's letters, and now I am come home can write and write. While I was with Mr. Langton we took four little journies in a chaise, and made one little voyage on the Medway, with four misses and their maid, but they were very quiet.

I am very well, except that my voice soon falters, and I have not slept well, which I imputed to the heat, which has been such as I never felt before for so long time¹. Three days we had of very great heat about ten years ago. I infer nothing from it but a good harvest.

Whether this short rustication² has done me any good I cannot tell, I certainly am not worse, and am very willing to think myself better. Are you better? Sophy gave but a poor account of you. Do not let your mind wear out your body.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

870.

TO MISS SOPHIA THRALE³.

DEAREST MISS SOPHY,

London, July 24, 1783.

By an absence from home, and for one reason and another,

Pennant's *London*, ed. 1790, p. 296.
See *Life*, i. 458, n. 2.

Budget Johnson defines as 'a bag, such as may be easily carried.' The sense in which it is now commonly used, as 'the yearly financial statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer,' is not given in his *Dictionary*. In his Letter to Taylor, *post*, p. 322, he calls his budget his portmanteau.

¹ Horace Walpole wrote on July 15:—'As much as I love to have summer in summer, I am tired of this weather—'

"The dreaded east is all the wind that blows *."

It parches the leaves, makes the turf crisp, claps the doors, blows the papers about, and keeps one in a

constant mist that gives no dew, but might as well be smoke. The sun sets like a pewter plate red-hot; and then in a moment appears the moon, at a distance, of the same complexion, just as the same orb in a moving picture serves for both.' *Letters*, viii. 386. 'In 1783 Europe was covered with a dense dry haze for several months during the summer, and the sun was shorn of its rays during a long period of dry weather. The haze extended from the sea-level to an elevation higher than the tops of the Alps. It followed a great eruption in Iceland.' *The Eruption of Krakatoa*, p. 195.

² *Rustication* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 295.

* *The Rape of the Lock*, iv. 20.

I owe a great number of letters, and I assure you that I sit down to write yours first. Why you should think yourself not a favourite, I cannot guess; my favour will, I am afraid, never be worth much; but be its value more or less, you are never likely to lose it, and less likely if you continue your studies with the same diligence as you have begun them.

Your proficiencie in arithmetick is not only to be commended, but admired. Your master does not, I suppose, come very often, nor stay very long; yet your advance in the science of numbers is greater than is commonly made by those who, for so many weeks as you have been learning, spend six hours a day in the writing school¹.

Never think, my Sweet, that you have arithmetick enough; when you have exhausted your master, buy books. Nothing amuses more harmlessly than computation, and nothing is oftener applicable to real business or speculative enquiries. A thousand stories which the ignorant tell, and believe, die away at once, when the computist takes them in his gripe. I hope you will cultivate in yourself a disposition to numerical enquiries; they will give you entertainment in solitude by the practice, and reputation in publick by the effect².

If you can borrow *Wilkins's Real Character*³, a folio, which

¹ By *writing-school* Johnson, I think, meant that part of a public school in which English subjects were taught.

² 'Useful, and what we call everyday knowledge had the most of Johnson's just praise. "Let your boy learn arithmetic, dear Madam," was his advice to the mother of a rich young heir. "He will not then be a prey to every rascal which this town swarms with; teach him the value of money, and how to reckon it. Ignorance to a wealthy lad of one and twenty is only so much fat to a sick sheep; it just serves to call the rooks about him." Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 195. The boy was no doubt Sir John Lade. *Ante*, ii. 191, n. 1. For Johnson's love of arithmetic see *Life*,

i. 72, and for instances where 'he takes stories in his gripe,' *ib.* iv. 171, 204.

³ *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, by John Wilkins, D.D., 1668. Wilkins was at one time Warden of Wadham College, and afterwards Bishop of Chester. He married a sister of Oliver Cromwell. He was one of the founders of the Royal Society. Burnet describes him as 'a great observer and a promoter of experimental philosophy, which was then a new thing, and much looked after.' *History of His Own Times*, ed. 1818, i. 207. According to Addison, 'the Bishop was so confident of success in the art of flying that he says he does not question but

the bookseller can perhaps let you have, you will have a very curious calculation, which you are qualified to consider, to shew that Noah's ark was capable of holding all the known animals of the world, with provision for all the time in which the earth was under water. Let me hear from you soon again.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

871.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

When your letter came to me I was with Mr. Langton at Rochester. I was suspicious that you were ill. He that goes away, you know, is to write, and for some time I expected a letter every post.

My general health is undoubtedly better than before the seizure. Yesterday I came from Gravesend by water, and carried my portmanteau from Billingsgate to Cornhil [*sic*], before I could get a coach², nor did I find any great inconvenience in doing it.

in the next age it will be as usual to hear a man call for his wings when he is going a journey as it is now to call for his boots.' *The Guardian*, No. 112.

In a 'Digression' Wilkins replies to 'hereticks of old and Atheistical scoffers in these later times who have confidently affirmed that it was utterly impossible for the Ark to hold so vast a multitude of Animals, with a whole year's provision of food for each of them.' He calculates that 'the beasts of the rapacious carnivorous kinds were but forty in all or twenty pairs, which upon a fair calculation are supposed equivalent, as to the bulk of their bodies and their food, unto twenty-seven Wolves; but for greater certainty let them be supposed equal to thirty Wolves; and let it be further supposed that six

Wolves will every day devour a whole Sheep; according to this computation five Sheep must be allotted to be devoured for food each day of the year, which amounts in the whole to 1825.' He gives a picture and a plan showing how all the animals and their food can be stowed away. P. 166.

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 481.

² Hume, writing of the year 1635, says:—'There remains a proclamation of this year prohibiting hackney-coaches from standing in the street. We are told that there were not above twenty coaches of that kind in London. There are at present near eight hundred.' *Hist. of Eng.*, ed. 1773, vi. 308. In the first edition he had said 'above a thousand' and in the second 'near a thousand.' In

My

My voice in the exchange of salutations, or on other little occasions, is as it was, but in a continuance of conversation it soon tires. I hope it grows stronger, but it does not make very quick advance.

I hope you continue well, or grow every day better; yet the time will come when one of us shall lose the other. May it come upon neither of us unprepared.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

July 24, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

872.

TO MISS SUSANNA THRALE¹.

DEAR MISS SUSAN,

London, July 26, 1783.

I answer your letter last, because it was received last; and when I have answered it, I am out of debt to your house. A short negligence throws one behindhand. This maxim, if you consider and improve it, will be equivalent to your parson and bird, which is however a very good story, as it shews how far gluttony may proceed, which where it prevails is I think more violent, and certainly more despicable, than avarice itself.

Gluttony is, I think, less common among women than among men². Women commonly eat more sparingly, and are less curious in the choice of meat; but if once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue. Her mind is enslaved to the lowest and grossest temptation.

A friend of mine, who courted a lady of whom he did not know much, was advised to see her eat, and if she was voluptuous at table, to forsake her. He married her however, and in a few weeks came to his adviser with this exclamation, 'It is the disturbance of my life to see this woman eat.' She was, as might

Dodsley's *London*, 1761, iii. 124, it is stated:—'The number of coaches is limited to eight hundred. The fare for any distance not exceeding a mile and a half is one shilling.' By 1784

the number of the coaches had risen to a thousand. *Life*, iv. 330.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 297.

² For Johnson's own love of good eating see *Life*, i. 467.

be expected, selfish and brutal, and after some years of discord they parted, and I believe came together no more.

Of men, the examples are sufficiently common. I had a friend, of great eminence in the learned and the witty world, who had hung up some pots on his wall to furnish nests for sparrows. The poor sparrows, not knowing his character, were seduced by the convenience, and I never heard any man speak of any future enjoyment with such contortions of delight as he exhibited, when he talked of eating the young ones¹.

When you do me the favour to write again, tell me something of your studies, your work, or your amusements.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

873.

TO WILLIAM CUMBERLAND CRUIKSHANK.

London, July 30, 1783. Mentioned with other letters to the same surgeon in the *Life*, iv. 240.

874.

TO DR. JOHN MUDGE.

London, July and August, 1783. Several Letters from which extracts are given in the *Life*, iv. 240.

875.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, August 13, 1783.

Your letter was brought just as I was complaining that you had forgotten me.

¹ According to Mrs. Piozzi this friend was Isaac Hawkins Browne. Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 320. 'The pretty Mrs. Cholmondely said she was soon tired of him, because the first hour he was so dull, there was no bearing him; the second he was so witty, there was no bearing him; the third he was so drunk, there was no bearing him.' *Ib.* i. 152. 'He drank freely for thirty years,' said

Johnson, 'and wrote his poem *De Animi Immortalitate* in some of the last of these years.' *Life*, v. 156. According to Mrs. Piozzi (*Anecdotes*, p. 173), Johnson spoke of him as 'the most delightful converser with whom he ever was in company.' In Campbell's *British Poets* are given specimens of his verses.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 299.

I am

I am glad that the ladies find so much novelty at Weymouth. Ovid says, that the sun is undelightfully uniform¹. They had some expectation of shells, which both by their form and colours have a claim to human curiosity². Of all the wonders, I have had no account, except that Miss Thrale seems pleased with your little voyages.

Sophy mentioned a story which her sisters would not suffer her to tell, because they would tell it themselves, but it has never yet been told me.

Mrs. Ing is, I think, a baronet's daughter, of an ancient house in Staffordshire. Of her husband's father, mention is made in the life of Ambrose Philips³.

Of this world, in which you represent me as delighting to live, I can say little. Since I came home I have only been to church, once to Burney's, once to Paradise's, and once to Reynolds's. With Burney I saw Dr. Rose⁴, his new relation, with whom I have been many years acquainted. If I discovered no reliques of disease I am glad, but Fanny's trade is fiction⁵.

¹ Johnson, I conjecture, wrote not *sun* but *sea*. The ladies had just arrived at the sea-side.

² Johnson's ignorance of the importance of natural history is shown by the following passage in *The Rambler*, No. 83:—"To mean understandings it is sufficient honour to be numbered amongst the lowest labourers of learning; but different abilities must find different tasks. To hew stone would have been unworthy of Palladio; and to have rambled in search of shells and flowers had but ill-suited with the capacity of Newton." See *Life*, ii. 468, for his attack on Brydone for his repeating the observations of a Sicilian geologist.

³ Philips had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at

table, when I asked him how came the King of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say *I'm goaded on by love*. After which question he never spoke again." *Works*, viii. 394. Theodore William Inge of Thorpe Constantine, near Tanworth, the son of 'the gentleman of great eminence,' married Henrietta, daughter of Sir John Wrottesley. *Burke's Landed Gentry*, ed. 1882, i. 849.

⁴ Dr. Rose was a schoolmaster of Chiswick. One of his daughters had married Dr. Burney's son Charles, the Greek scholar, on June 24 of this year. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 540. Another daughter, who married a Mr. Foss, was the mother of Edward Foss, the author of the *Judges of England*. *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* xx. 51.

⁵ It was Miss Burney, a writer of fiction, who had reported to Mrs. Thrale that Johnson showed no traces of disease.

I have

I have since partaken of an epidemical disorder, but common evils produce no dejection¹.

Paradise's company, I fancy, disappointed him; I remember nobody. With Reynolds was the archbishop of Tuam, a man coarse of voice and inelegant of language².

I am now broken with disease, without the alleviation of familiar friendship or domestick society; I have no middle state between clamour and silence, between general conversation and self-tormenting solitude. Levet is dead, and poor Williams is making haste to die: I know not if she will ever more come out of her chamber.

I am now quite alone, but let me turn my thoughts another way.

I am, Madam,

. Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

876.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

MADAM,

London, August 20, 1783.

This has been a day of great emotion; the office of the Communion of the Sick has been performed in poor Mrs. Williams's chamber. She was too weak to rise from her bed, and is therefore to be supposed unlikely to live much longer. She has, I

¹ Johnson's position may be illustrated by the following passage in one of his *Adventurers* (No. III):—'It is asserted by a tragic poet that *est miser nemo nisi comparatus*, "no man is miserable but as he is compared with others happier than himself."' Horace Walpole wrote on September 1:—'The summer has been wonderfully hot, and of late very unhealthy. Our globe really seems to be disordered.' *Letters*, viii. 404. See *ante*, ii. 320, *n.* 1.

² The following anecdote in the *Memoir of Goldsmith* prefixed to his *Misc. Works*, ed. 1801, i. 110, though dated August 7, 1773, no doubt belongs to this year:—'I was dining

at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, August 7, 1773, where were the Archbishop of Tuam and Mr. (now Lord) Eliot, when the latter making use of some sarcastical reflections on Goldsmith, Johnson broke out warmly in his defence, and in the course of a spirited eulogium said, "Is there a man, Sir, now who can pen an essay with such ease and elegance as Goldsmith?"' On August 7, 1773, Johnson was on his way to Scotland. *Ante*, i. 223. In 1784 Reynolds exhibited the portrait of Dr. Bourke, Archbishop of Tuam. Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 435.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 301.

hope,

hope, little violent pain, but is wearing out by torpid inappetence¹ and wearisome decay; but all the powers of her mind are in their full vigour, and when she has spirits enough for conversation, she possesses all the intellectual excellence that she ever had. Surely this is an instance of mercy much to be desired by a parting soul².

At home I see almost all my companions dead or dying. At Oxford I have just left³ Wheeler, the man with whom I most delighted to converse. The sense of my own diseases, and the sight of the world sinking round me, oppress me perhaps too much. I hope that all these admonitions will not be vain, and that I shall learn to die as dear Williams is dying, who was very cheerful before and after this awful solemnity, and seems to resign herself with calmness and hope upon eternal mercy.

I read your last kind letter with great delight; but when I came to *love* and *honour*, what sprung in my mind?—How loved, how honoured once, avails thee not⁴.

I sat to Mrs. Reynolds yesterday for my picture, perhaps the tenth time⁵, and I sat near three hours with the patience of *mortal born to bear*; at last she declared it quite finished, and seems to think it fine. I told her it was *Johnson's grimly ghost*.

¹ Johnson gives in his *Dictionary* not *inappetence* but *inappetency*, defining it as 'want of stomach or appetite.'

² When near his end he refused opiates; 'for,' said he, 'I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded.' *Life*, iv. 415.

³ *Left* is no doubt a misprint for *lost*. Johnson's *s* is easily mistaken for *f*. Dr. Wheeler died on July 22, 1783. Hannah More who was at Oxford at the time writes:—'Poor Dr. Wheeler! but don't you pity the excellent Bishop of London? He sent off an express, as soon as his daughter died, to hasten Dr. Wheeler up to be with and console him; an

express from the doctor's sister to say he was dead met the Bishop's messenger on the road.' H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 294. Miss Lowth, the Bishop's last surviving child, died suddenly on July 21, and Dr. Wheeler died suddenly the next day. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 629.

⁴ He is quoting a line in Pope's *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*.

⁵ He had sat to her three years earlier. *Ante*, ii. 179. According to Northcote, Reynolds said of his sister's oil-paintings, 'they make other people laugh and me cry.' 'She generally,' Northcote adds, 'did them by stealth.' *Life of Reynolds*, ii. 160.

It is to be engraved, and I think *in glided*, &c.¹ will be a good inscription.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

877.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, August 26, 1783.

Things stand with me much as they have done for some time. Mrs. Williams fancies now and then that she grows better, but her vital powers appear to be slowly burning out. Nobody thinks however that she will very soon be quite wasted, and as she suffers me to be of very little use to her, I have determined to pass some time with Mr. Bowles near Salisbury³, and have taken a place for Thursday.

¹ "'Twas at the silent solemn hour
When night and morning meet;
In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet.'

Margaret's Ghost. Percy Ballads,
iii. 3, 16.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 303.

³ For Johnson's visit to Heale, near Salisbury, see *Life*, iv. 234-9. One of Johnson's fellow-travellers in the stage-coach described the journey in the *Monthly Magazine*, quoted in Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1844, x. 151. I abridge his account. 'Upon entering the coach,' he writes, 'I perceived three gentlemen, one of whom strongly attracted my notice. He was a corpulent man, with a book in his hand, placed very near to his eyes. He had a large wig which did not appear to have been combed for an age; his clothes were threadbare. I was struck with his resemblance to the print of Dr. Johnson, given as a frontispiece to the *Lives of the Poets*. The gentleman by the side of him remarked, "I wonder, Sir, that you can read in a coach which

travels so swiftly [with halts for meals it took nearly fifteen hours to go eighty-two miles]; it would make my head ache." "Ay, Sir," replied he, "books make some people's head ache." This appeared to me Johnsonian. I knew several persons with whom Dr. Johnson was well acquainted. "Do you know Miss Hannah More, Sir?" "Well, Sir; the best of all the female versifiers." We now reached Hounslow, and were served with our breakfast. [Hounslow is 9½ miles from Hyde Park Corner]. "May I take the liberty, Sir, to enquire whether you be not Dr. Johnson?" "The same, Sir." "I am happy," replied I, "to congratulate the learned world that Dr. Johnson, whom the papers lately announced to be dangerously indisposed, is re-established in his health." "The civillest young man I ever met with in my life" was the answer. From that moment he became very gracious towards me. I was then preparing to go abroad. "What book of travels, Sir, would you advise
Some

Some benefit may be perhaps received from change of air, some from change of company, and some from mere change of place. It is not easy to grow well in a chamber where one has long been sick, and where every thing seen and every person speaking revives and impresses images of pain. Though it be that no man can run away from himself¹, he may yet escape from many causes of useless uneasiness. That the *mind is its own place*², is the boast of a fallen angel that had learned to lie. External locality has great effects, at least upon all embodied beings. I hope this little journey will afford me at least some suspense of melancholy.

You give but an unpleasing account of your performance at Portland. Your scrambling days are then over. I remember when no Miss and few Masters could have left you behind, or *thrown you out in the pursuit of honour*³ or of curiosity. But *tempus edax rerum*⁴, and no way has been yet found to draw his teeth.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

me to read, previously to my setting off upon a tour to France and Italy?" "Why, Sir, as to France, I know no book worth a groat; and as to Italy, Baretto paints the fair side, and Sharp the foul; the truth perhaps lies between the two." [See *Life*, ii. 57; iii. 55.] I observed that at dinner he drank only water. I asked him, whether he had ever tasted *bumbo*, a West Indian potation, which is neither more nor less than very strong punch. "No, Sir," said he. I made some. He tasted; and declared that if ever he drank anything else than water it should be *bumbo*. When the sad moment of separation at Salisbury arrived, "Sir," said he, "let me see you in London, upon your return to your native country. I am sorry that we must part. I have always looked upon it as the worst condition of man's destiny that persons are so often torn

asunder, just as they become happy in each other's society."

¹ 'Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt:'

'For they who through the venturous ocean range

Not their own passions, but the climate change.'

FRANCIS. HORACE, I *Epistles*, xi. 27.

² 'The mind is its own place, and in itself

Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.'

Paradise Lost, i. 254.

³ 'Whene'er did Juba, or did Portius show

A virtue that has cast me at a distance,

And thrown me out in the pursuits of honour.'

ADDISON. *Cato*, Act i. scene 1.

⁴ 'Tempus edax rerum, tuque invidiosa vetustas

To

878.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

Heale near Salisbury, August 29, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv.
234.

879.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

I sat to Opey as long as he desired, and I think the head is finished, but it [is] not much admired. The rest he is to add when he comes again to town².

I did not understand that you expected me at Ashbourne, and have been for a few days with a Gentleman in Wiltshire. If you write to me at London, my letters will be sent, if they should happen to come before I return.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Heale near Salisbury, Sept. 3, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor at Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Omnia destruitis.

OVID. *Metamorphoses*, xv. 234.

'Thy teeth, devouring time, thine,
envious age,

On things below still exercise your
rage.'

DRYDEN.

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 481.

² Opie who was only twenty-two years old, had been brought up to London in 1781 by Dr. Wolcot. He is described by a brother Cornishman as 'that unlicked cub of a carpenter.' His father was glad to part with him. He said, 'the boy was good for nothing—could never make a wheel-barrow—was always gazing upon cats, and staring volks in the face.' R. Polwhele's *Traditions, &c.*,

ed. 1826, i. 77. In London at first he was all the rage. 'The street where he lived was so crowded with coaches of the nobility as to become a real nuisance to the neighbourhood; so that, as he jestingly observed to me,' writes Northcote, 'he thought he must place cannon at his door to keep the multitude off. He was only the embryo of a painter; when he had proved himself to be a real artist the capricious public left him with disgust because he was a novelty no longer.' Northcote's *Reynolds*, ii. 126. Hawkins believes that the portrait of Johnson was never finished. Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 569. In 1889 it was given to the Athenæum Club, London, by Mr. T. Humphry Ward. *Athenæum*, August 10, 1889.

To

880.

TO MISS SUSANNA THRALE¹.

DEAR MISS, [Heale], September 9, 1783.

I am glad that you and your sisters have been at Portland. You now can tell what is a quarry and what is a cliff. Take all opportunities of filling your mind with genuine scenes of nature : description is always fallacious, at least till you have seen realities you cannot know it to be true. This observation might be extended to life, but life cannot be surveyed with the same safety as nature, and it is better to know vice and folly by report than by experience. A painter, says Sydney, mingled in the battle that he might know how to paint it ; but his knowledge was useless, for some mischievous sword took away his head². They whose speculation upon characters leads them too far into the world, may lose that nice sense of good and evil by which characters are to be tried. Acquaint yourself therefore both with the pleasing and the terrible parts of nature, but in life wish to know only the good.

Pray shew Mamma this passage of a letter from Dr. Brocklesby : 'Mrs. Williams, from mere inanition, has at length paid the great debt to nature³, about three o'clock this morning, (Sept. 6). She died without a struggle, retaining her faculties entire to the very last, and as she expressed it, having set her house in order⁴, was prepared to leave it at the last summons of nature.'

I do not now say any thing more than that I am,

My dearest,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

881.

TO FRANCIS BARBER⁵.

DEAR FRANCIS, Heale, Sept. 16, 1783.

I rather wonder that you have never written ; but that is

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 308.

² It was the painter's hands that were struck off. 'So he returned, well skilled in wounds, but with never a hand to perform his skill.' *Arcadia*, ed. 1725, i. 359.

³ 'The fear of death, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak.' Bacon's

Essays : Of Death.

'Your son, my Lord, has paid a soldier's debt.'

Macbeth, Act v. sc. 8.

⁴ *2 Kings* xx. 1.

⁵ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 739.

now not necessary, for I purpose to be with [you] on Thursday before dinner. As Thursday is my birth-day¹, I would have a little dinner got, and would have you invite Mrs. Desmoulins, Mrs. Davis² that was about Mrs. Williams, and Mr. Allen and Mrs. Gardiner.

I am,

Yours, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

882.

TO DR. BURNEY.

[London], September 20, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 239.

883.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Sept. 22, 1783.

Happy are you that have ease and leisure to want intelli-

¹ See *ante*, i. 250, for Johnson's unwillingness to have his birthday recalled to his thoughts. In 1781 he viewed the day with calmness, if not with cheerfulness. He writes:—"I rose, breakfasted, and gave thanks at church for my creation, preservation, and redemption. As I came home, I thought I had never begun any period of life so placidly. I have always been accustomed to let this day pass unnoticed, but it came this time into my mind that some little festivity was not improper. I had a dinner; and invited Allen and Levet." *Pr. and Med.*, p. 198. On his return to London he wrote to Dr. Burney:—"I came home on the 18th at noon, to a very disconsolate house." *Life*, iv. 239. The following day at the Old Bailey, a few minutes' walk from Johnson's house, fifty-eight convicts received sentence of death. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 802.

² Not the wife of Tom Davies, of whom Churchill wrote:—

'That Davies hath a very pretty wife.'

Churchill's *Poems*, ed. 1766, i. 16.

This Mrs. Davis was most likely the woman whom Miss Burney found at Bolt Court the day before Johnson's death. She writes:—"All the rest went away but a Mrs. Davis, a good sort of woman, whom this truly charitable soul had sent for to take a dinner at his house. I then went and waited with her by the fire. Mr. Langton then came. He could not look at me, and I turned away from him. Mrs. Davis asked how the Doctor was. "Going on to death very fast," was his mournful answer. "Has he taken," said she, "anything?" "Nothing at all. We carried him some bread and milk—he refused it, and said:—'The less the better.'" *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 337.

For Mr. Allen see *ante*, ii. 61, and for Mrs. Gardiner, *ante*, ii. 174.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 310.

gence

gence of air-ballons¹. Their existence is I believe indubitable; but I know not that they can possibly be of any use. The construction is this. The chymical philosophers have discovered a body (which I have forgotten, but will enquire), which, dissolved by an acid, emits a vapour lighter than the atmospherical air². This vapour is caught, among other means, by tying a bladder, compressed upon the bottle in which the dissolution is performed; the vapour rising swells the bladder, and fills it. The bladder is then tied and removed, and another applied, till as much of this light air is collected as is wanted. Then a large spherical case is made, and very large it must be, of the lightest matter that can be found, secured by some method, like that of oiling silk, against all passage of air. Into this are emptied all the bladders of light air, and if there is light air enough it mounts into the clouds, upon the same principle as a bottle filled with water will sink in water, but a bottle filled with æther would float. It rises till it comes to air of equal tenuity with its own³, if wind or water does not spoil it on the way. Such, Madam, is an air ballon.

¹ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1783, p. 795, under date of 'Paris, September 2,' it is reported that 'a discovery has been made, of which the Government hath thought proper to give notice, in order to prevent the terrors which it might excite among the people.' The balloon is then described. No person went up till a few weeks later. *Post*, Letter of December 13, 1783. Cowper wrote the day after Johnson:— 'French philosophers amuse themselves, and, according to their own phrase, cover themselves with glory by inventing air-balls, which by their own buoyancy ascend above the clouds, and are lost in regions which no human contrivance could ever penetrate before. An English tailor, an inhabitant of the dung-hills of Silver End, prays, and his prayer ascends into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.—He indeed covers

himself with glory, fights battles, and gains victories; but makes no noise. Europe is not astonished at his feats, foreign Academies do not seek him for a member; he will never discover the art of flying, or send a globe of taffeta up to heaven. But he will go thither himself.' Cowper's *Works*, iv. 305.

Johnson in his *Dictionary* has *ballon*, or *balloon*, but not, of course, in the sense which it was henceforth to bear. In the *Ann. Reg.* for 1783, i. 215, the word is spelt *ballon*.

² The 'body' was iron-filings, the acid sulphuric acid, and the vapour nitrogen.

³ It has been found that a ball filled with inflammable air could mount of itself towards the sky, without stopping till both the airs were in equilibrium, which must be at a very great height.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, p. 795.

Meteors

Meteors have been this autumn very often seen¹, but I have never been in their way.

Poor Williams has I hope seen the end of her afflictions. She acted with prudence and she bore with fortitude. She has left me.

Thou thy weary task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages².

Had she had good humour and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her. She left her little to your charity school³.

¹ On August 18 a great meteor was seen at such distant places as Ostend, London, Edinburgh, and the North of Ireland. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, pp. 711, 712, 795, 885. The poet Crabbe and his wife saw this 'glorious phenomenon, as it burst forth as large as the moon, but infinitely more brilliant. My mother,' writes their son, 'who happened to be riding behind, said that even at that awful moment (for she concluded that the end of all things was at hand) she was irresistibly struck with my father's attitude. He had raised himself from his horse, lifted his arm, and spread his hand towards the object of admiration and terror, and appeared transfixed with astonishment.' Crabbe's *Works*, i. 124. Cowper, in the Second Book of the *Task*, alluding, as he says in a note, to this meteor and also 'to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole of this summer' (*ante*, ii. 320, n. 1), writes:—

'Fires from beneath, and meteors
from above
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies,
and th' old
And crazy earth has had her shaking
fits

More frequent, and foregone her
usual rest.

Is it a time to wrangle, when the
props

And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature with a dim and sickly
eye

To wait the close of all?'

COWPER'S *Poems*, ed. 1786, ii. 48.

² 'Thou thy *worldly* task, &c.'

Cymbeline, Act iv. sc. 2.

³ The Charity School was The Ladies' Charity School in the Parish of St. Sepulchre, mentioned in the *Life*, iv. 246. It was founded in 1702, with the object of training young girls for domestic servants. Mrs. Thrale was one of the Managers, and Johnson was a subscriber from 1777 till his death. It is recorded in the Minutes on March 12, 1783:— 'Dr. Johnson, having turn, presents Mary Ann Austin, daughter of Charles and Amey Austin, living at the top of Goswell Street, at one Mr. Mason's, near the prison bar.' Mrs. Williams, a few weeks before her death, had given the School £200; the remainder of her substance, amounting to £157, she left to it in her will. Probably the money which she had made by the benefit that Garrick had given her at Drury Lane, amounting to £200, had been invested. *Ib.* i.

The

The complaint about which you enquire is a sarcocele: I thought it a hydrocele¹, and heeded it but little. Puncture has detected the mistake: it can be safely suffered no longer. Upon inspection three days ago it was determined *extrema ventura*. If excision should be delayed there is danger of a gangrene. You would not have me for fear of pain² perish in putrescence. I shall I hope, with trust in eternal mercy, lay hold of the possibility of life which yet remains. My health is not bad; the gout is now trying at³ my feet. My appetite and digestion are good, and my sleep better than formerly: I am not dejected, and I am not feeble. There is however danger enough in such operations at seventy-four.

Let me have your prayers and those of the young dear people.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Write soon and often.

393, *n.* 1. In the possession of the Charity are her four silver tea-spoons, and sugar-tongs, and her portrait. It shows a woman of a strong but not very amiable character. It is perhaps the work of Miss Reynolds. The same Charity possesses six tea-spoons which by tradition belonged to Johnson. They were made, as the hall-mark shows, in the year of Mrs. Williams' death. He had always taken tea with her. When her spoons were given to the Charity he had to supply their place. With them he had stirred countless cups of tea. Goldsmith and Boswell had used them with pride when 'they went to Miss Williams' (*Life*, i. 421). Reynolds doubtless had often handled them, and Burke and many a famous man besides.

The School was first established in King Street, Snow Hill. In 1847

it was moved to John Street, Bedford Row; thence to Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, and lastly to Powis Gardens, Notting Hill, where it is carried on with efficiency. Since its foundation more than 1500 girls have been started in life.*

¹ John Wesley suffered from the same complaint. 'After two years he submitted to an operation, and obtained a cure. A little before this he notices in his *Journal* the first night that he had passed in wakefulness; "I believe," he adds, "few can say this; in seventy years I never lost one night's sleep."' Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ed. 1846, ii. 384.

² See *Life*, iv. 399, 418, for his eagerness to endure pain if thereby life could be prolonged.

³ Johnson in his *Dictionary* gives no instance of this use of *try*.

* For most of this information I am indebted to Miss A. M. Moore, of Oakfield, Eltham, the Hon. Secretary of the School.

884.

TO MRS. MONTAGU ¹.

September 22, 1783.

MADAM,

That respect which is always due to beneficence makes it fit that you should be informed, otherwise than by the papers, that, on the 6th of this month, died your pensioner, Anna Williams, of whom it may be truly said, that she received your bounty with gratitude, and enjoyed it with propriety². You perhaps have still her prayers.

You have, Madam, the satisfaction of having alleviated the sufferings of a woman of great merit, both intellectual and moral. Her curiosity was universal, her knowledge was very extensive, and she sustained forty years of misery with steady fortitude. Thirty years and more she had been my companion, and her death has left me very desolate.

That I have not written sooner, you may impute to absence, to ill-health, to any thing rather than want of regard to the benefactress of my departed friend.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 739.

² For Mrs. Montagu's kindness to Mrs. Williams, see *ante*, i. 371, *n.* 1. Mr. Croker, with a grossness and confusion of thought which were not uncommon in him, says in a note that 'Mrs. Montagu's pension to Mrs. Williams was in truth an indirect benefaction to Johnson himself, and was probably so meant by the delicate and courteous charity of that excellent lady.'

This letter brought to a close Johnson's quarrel with Mrs. Montagu. *Ante*, ii. 139, *n.* 1, and *post*, p. 340. He told Miss Burney of his letter and added :—

"And I had a very kind answer from her."

"Well then, Sir," cried I, "I hope peace now will be again proclaimed."

"Why, I am now," said he, "come to that time when I wish all bitterness and animosity to be at an end. I have never done her any serious harm—nor would I; though I could give her a bite! but she must provoke me much first. In volatile talk, indeed, I may have spoken of her not much to her mind; for in the tumult of conversation malice is apt to grow sprightly; and there, I hope, I am not yet decrepid." Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 292.

To

885.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

My case is what you think it, of the worst kind, a Sarcocoele². There is I suppose nothing to be done but by the knife—I have within these four days been violently attacked by the gout, which if [1] should continue in its grip³ would retard the other business; but I hope it will abate.

I am, dear Sir,

Your humble servant,

Sept. 24, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

886.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

London, September 29, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 240.

887.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London, September or October, 1783]. Two letters quoted in part in the *Life*, iv. 241.

888.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], September 30, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 241.

889.

TO MISS REYNOLDS⁴.

DEAR MADAM,

October 1, 1783.

I am very ill indeed, and to my former illness is superadded the gout. I am now without shoes, and I have been lately almost motionless.

To my other afflictions is added solitude. Mrs. Williams,

¹ This copy of the original I owe to the kindness of Mr. John S. H. Fogg, of 481 Broadway, Boston, United States.

³ Johnson perhaps wrote *gripe*, in accordance with the spelling in his *Dictionary*.

⁴ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 740.

² See *ante*, ii. 335, and *Life*, iv. 239.

a companion of thirty years, is gone. It is a comfort to me to have you near me.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

890.

TO MR. TOMKESON¹.

SIR,

1st October, 1783.

I have known Mr. Lowe very familiarly a great while. I consider him as a man of very clear and vigorous understanding, and conceive his principles to be such that whatever you transact with him you have nothing to expect from him unbecoming a gentleman,

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

891.

TO MRS. THRALE².

MADAM,

London, Oct. 6, 1783.

When I shall give a good and settled account of my health I cannot venture to say; some account I am ready to give, because I am pleased to find that you desire it.

I yet sit without shoes, with my foot upon a pillow, but my pain and weakness are much abated, and I am no longer crawling upon two sticks. To the gout my mind is reconciled by another letter from Mr. Mudge, in which he vehemently urges the excision, and tells me that the gout will secure me from every thing paralytick³: if this be true, I am ready to say to the arthritick pains, *Deh! venite ogni di, durate un anno*⁴.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 823.

For Mauritius Lowe see *ante*, ii. 203. The name *Tomkeson* is not in the indexes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Perhaps the copyist has been at fault.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 313.

³ See *ante*, ii. 108, *n.* 5. Mr. Mudge, Boswell describes as 'the celebrated surgeon, and now physician, of Plymouth.' *Life*, i. 378. For Johnson's letters to him about his health see *ib.* iv. 240.

⁴ Mrs. Piozzi in her *Anecdotes*, p. 69, quotes 'the famous distich of

My

My physician in ordinary is Dr. Brocklesby, who comes almost every day; my surgeon in Mr. Pott's absence is Mr. Cruikshank, the present reader in Dr. Hunter's school¹. Neither of them however do much more than look and talk. The general health of my body is as good as you have ever known it, almost as good as I can remember.

The carriage which you supposed made rough by my weakness was the common Salisbury stage, high hung, and driven to Salisbury in a day. I was not fatigued².

Mr. Pott has been out of town, but I expect to see him soon, and will then tell you something of the main affair, of which there seems now to be a better prospect.

This afternoon I have given to Mrs. Cholmondely, Mrs. Way,

an Italian *improvisatore*, when the Duke of Modena ran away from the comet in the year 1742 or 1743:—

Se al venir vostro i principi sen-
vanno

Deh venga ogni di—durate un
anno,

“which,” said Dr. Johnson, “would do just as well in our language thus:—

If at your coming princes disappear,
Comets! come every day—and stay
a year.”

Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, p. 69.

¹ In 1784 Reynolds exhibited Pott's portrait in the Academy. Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 435.

Dr. William Hunter in 1770 opened at his own expense an Anatomical School in Great Windmill Street, with a Museum attached. Cruikshank was successively his pupil, anatomical-assistant, and partner. On Hunter's death he and Dr. Baillie carried on the School. ‘He occasionally indulged himself too freely with the bottle although never to intoxication or insensibility.’ He died of apoplexy at the age of 55 on June 27, 1800. His Christian names, William Cumberland, were given by his parents—

he was a Scotchman—‘out of compliment to the hero of Culloden.’ If he was born, as is stated, in 1745, that battle had not yet been fought, and the Duke was neither hero nor butcher. ‘Cruikshank attended Dr. Johnson in his last illness, and was termed by him, in allusion to his benevolent disposition, “a sweet-blooded man.” When he was lancing the dying man's legs to reduce the dropsy, Johnson called out to him, “I want life and you are afraid of giving me pain—deeper, deeper.”’ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1800, ii. 694, 792; Chalmers' *Biog. Dict.* xviii. 325, and *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* xiii. 260. See also *Life*, iv. 219, for Johnson's letter to Reynolds recommending Cruikshank as Hunter's successor as Professor of Anatomy to the Royal Academy.

See Appendix B for Dr. Brocklesby's Report of a conversation with Johnson and Boswell on March 30, 1783, the day of Hunter's death.

² He had written to Dr. Brocklesby:—‘I was no more wearied with the journey, though it was a high-hung rough coach, than I should have been forty years ago.’ *Ib.* iv. 234.

Lady Sheffield's relation, Mr. Kindersley the describer of Indian manners¹, and another anonymous lady.

As Mrs. Williams received a pension from Mrs. Montagu, it was fit to notify her death. The account has brought me a letter not only civil but tender; so I hope peace is proclaimed².

The state of the Stocks I take to be this: When in the late exigencies the ministry gave so high a price for money, all the money that could be disengaged from trade was lent to the publick. The stocks sunk because nobody bought them³. They have not risen since, because the money being already lent out, nobody has money to lay out upon them till commerce shall by the help of peace bring a new supply. If they cannot rise, they will sometimes fall; for their essence seems to be fluctuation; but the present sudden fall is occasioned by the report of some, new disturbances and demands which the Irish are machinating⁴.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

892.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

London, October 9, 1783.

Two nights ago Mr. Burke sat with me a long time; he seems much pleased with his journey. We had both seen Stonehenge this summer for the first time. I told him that the view

¹ For Mrs. Cholmondeley see *ante*, ii. 186, and for Mrs. Way, *ante*, ii. 252. Mr. Kindersley is a mistake for Mrs. Kinsderley, who in 1777 published *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies*.

² *Ante*, ii. 336, n. 2.

³ On September 9 the three per cent. consols were at 64; by October 6 they had fallen to 59. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1783, pp. 808, 896. 'Thursday, September 25. This day Nathan Solomon, the great Jew broker, sent a letter to the Stock Exchange, declaring his intention

never more to return to that house. The stocks fell considerably. At one period the three per cent. consols were done at 58½. Such a peace price was never before known in this country.' *Ib.* p. 803.

⁴ Horace Walpole wrote five days later:—'The aspect of Ireland is very tempestuous. I doubt they will hurt us materially without benefitting themselves. If they obtain very short parliaments, they will hurt themselves more than us, by introducing a confusion that will prevent their improvements.' *Letters*, viii. 417.

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 315.

had

had enabled me to confute two opinions which have been advanced about it. One, that the materials are not natural stones, but an artificial composition hardened by time. This notion is as old as Camden's time ; and has this strong argument to support it, that stone of that species is no where to be found. The other opinion, advanced by Dr. Charlton, is, that it was erected by the Danes¹.

Mr. Bowles² made me observe, that the transverse stones were fixed on the perpendicular supporters by a knob formed on the top of the upright stone, which entered into a hollow cut in the crossing stone. This is a proof that the enormous edifice was raised by a people who had not yet the knowledge of mortar ; which cannot be supposed of the Danes who came hither in ships, and were not ignorant certainly of the arts of life. This proves likewise the stones not to be factitious ; for they that could mould such durable masses could do much more than make mortar, and could have continued the transverse from the upright part with the same paste.

You have doubtless seen Stonehenge, and if you have not, I should think it a hard task to make an adequate description.

It is, in my opinion, to be referred to the earliest habitation of the Island, as a Druidical monument of at least two thousand years ; probably the most ancient work of man upon the Island.

¹ ' It is the opinion of some,' writes Camden, ' that these stones are not natural, or such as are dug out of the quarries, but artificial, of fine sand cemented together by a glewy sort of matter.' Camden's *Britannia*, ed. 1722, i. 121. Walter Charleton published in 1663 *Chorea Gigantum ; or the most famous Antiquity of Great Britain, vulgarly called Stone-Heng, standing on Salisbury Plain, restored to the Danes*. He maintained that it was ' principally, if not wholly, designed to be a Court Royal, or Place for the Election and Inauguration of their Kings.' Ed. 1725. The *Epistle Dedicatory*, p. 3. Dryden addressed

to him some lines in which he says :—
' Through you, the Danes (their short
dominion lost)

A longer conquest than the Saxons
boast.

Stone-Heng, once thought a Temple,
you have found

A Throne, where Kings, our Earthly
Gods, were crowned.'

Pepys records on July 28, 1666, some ' very pretty discourse of Dr. Charleton's, concerning Nature's fashioning every creature's teeth according to the food she intends them.' *Diary*, ed. 1851, iii. 245.

² Johnson's host at Heale. *Ante*, ii. 328.

Salisbury

Salisbury cathedral, and its neighbour Stonehenge, are two eminent monuments of art and rudeness, and may show the first essay, and the last perfection, in architecture.

I have not yet settled my thoughts about the generation of light air¹, which I indeed once saw produced, but I was at the height of my great complaint. I have made enquiry, and shall soon be able to tell you how to fill a ballon.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

893.

SIR.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².

Your prohibition to write till the operation is performed is likely, if I observed it, to interrupt our correspondence for a long time.

When Mr. Pot³ and Mr. Cruikshank examined the tumid vessicle, they thought it a Sarcoccele, or flesh swelling, I had flattered myself that it was only an hydrocele, or Water swelling. This could be determined with certainty only by puncture, which at my request was made by Mr. Pot, and which confirmed their opinion. They advised some palliative, and I went to a Friend in Wiltshire⁴, from whom the bulk and pain of the encreasing tumour drove me home for help.

Mr. Pot seemed to think that there was no help but from the knife, and only postponed the operation to his return from a journey of a week. In that week the puncture burst open, and by its discharge, abated the inflammation, relaxed the tension, and lessened the tumor by at least half. Mr. Pot at his return found so much amendment, that he has left the disease for a time to nature. Mr. Cruikshank would cut another orifice, but Mr.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 333. Johnson had 'attended some experiments that were made by a physician at Salisbury on the new kinds of air.' *Life*, iv. 237.

² From the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison, of Font-hill House.

³ Johnson lops off superfluous consonants. As he always writes *Boswel*, *Gastrel*, instead of *Boswell*, *Gastrell*, in like manner he cuts down *Pott*.

⁴ Mr. Bowles of Heale. *Ante*, ii. 328.

Pot is not yet willing. In the mean time I have no pain, and little inconvenience.

When all was at the worst, I consulted Mudge¹ of Plimouth, a very skilful man, and Dr. Heberden, who both vehemently pressed the excision, which perhaps would at last be the safer way, but Mr. Cruikshank is afraid of it. We must at present sit still.

I have for some weeks past had a sharp fit of the gout, to which I am reconciled by Mr. Mudge, who thinks it a security against the palsy; and indeed I recollect none that ever had both². I have now nothing of the gout, but feet a little tender, and ankles somewhat weak. I am in my general health better than for some years past.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Oct. 20, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

894.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, October 21, 1783.

I have formerly heard, what you perhaps have heard too, that—

The wheel of life is daily turning round,
And nothing in this world of certainty is found.

When in your letter of the eleventh, you told me that my two letters had obliged, consoled, and delighted you, I was much elevated, and longed for a larger answer; but when the answer of the nineteenth came, I found that the obliging, consolatory, and delightful paragraphs had made so little impression, that you want again to be told what those papers were written to tell you, and of what I can now tell you nothing new. I am as I was; with no pain and little inconvenience from the great complaint, and feeling nothing from the gout but a little tenderness and weakness.

Physiognomy, as it is a Greek word, ought to sound the G:

¹ *Ante*, ii. 338, n. 3.

² *Ante*, ii. 338.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 318.

but the French and Italians, I think, spell it without the G ; and from them perhaps we learned to pronounce it. G, I think, is sounded in formal, and sunk in familiar language.

Mr. Pott was with me this morning, and still continues his disinclination to *fire and sword*. The operation is therefore still suspended ; not without hopes of relief from some easier and more natural way.

Mrs. Porter the tragedian, with whom — spent part of his earlier life, was so much the favourite of her time, that she was welcomed on the stage when she trod it by the help of a stick¹. She taught her pupils no violent graces ; for she was a woman of very gentle and ladylike manners, though without much extent of knowledge, or activity of understanding.

You are now retired, and have nothing to impede self-examination or self-improvement. Endeavour to reform that instability of attention which your last letter has happened to betray. Perhaps it is natural for those that have much within to think little on things without ; but whoever lives heedlessly lives but in a mist, perpetually deceived by false appearances of the past, without any certain reliance on recollection. Perhaps this begins to be my state ; but I have not done my part very sluggishly, if it now begins.

The hour of solitude is now come, and Williams is gone. But I am not, I hope, improperly dejected. A little I read, and a little I think.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

895.

TO MRS. THRALE².

MADAM,

London, October 27, 1783.

You may be very reasonably weary of sickness ; it is neither pleasant to talk nor to hear of it. I hope soon to lose the dis-

¹ 'She died about the year 1762. When Johnson, some years before her death, paid her a visit she appeared to him so wrinkled that, he said, a picture of old age in the abstract might be taken from her countenance.' Davies's *Dram. Misc.*

iii. 500. He said that he had never seen her equalled 'in the vehemence of rage.' *Life*, iv. 243. According to Horace Walpole 'she surpassed Garrick in passionate tragedy.' *Letters*, iv. 336.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 320.

gusting

gusting topick ; for I have now neither pain nor sickness. My ancles are weak, and my feet tender. I have not tried to walk much above a hundred yards, and was glad to come back upon wheels. The Doctor and Mr. Metcalf¹ have taken me out. I sleep uncertainly and unseasonably. This is the sum of my complaint. I have not been so well for two years past. The great malady is neither heard, seen, felt, nor—understood. But I am very solitary.

Semperque relinqui

Sola sibi, semper longam incommittata videtur

Ire viam².

But I have begun to look among my books, and hope that I am all, whatever that was, which I have ever been.

Mrs. Siddons in her visit to me behaved with great modesty and propriety, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her. I shall be glad to see her again. Her brother Kemble calls on me, and pleases me very well. Mrs. Siddons and I talked of plays ; and she told me her intention of exhibiting this winter the characters of Constance, Catherine, and Isabella in Shakespeare³.

¹ In the autumn of the previous year Mr. Philip Metcalfe had taken Johnson out in his carriage, at Brighton. *Life*, iv. 159. 'Mr. Metcalfe seems,' writes Miss Burney, 'to have taken an unaccountable dislike to Mrs. Thrale, to whom he never speaks.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 172.

² VIRGIL. *Æneid*, iv. 466.

'She seems alone

To wander in her sleep through ways
unknown,
Guideless and dark.'

DRYDEN.

³ This passage is quoted by Boswell in the *Life*, iv. 242. To Mrs. Siddons's modesty testimony is borne by Horace Walpole, who wrote at Christmas, 1782 :—'Mrs. Siddons continues to be the mode, and to be

modest and sensible. She declines great dinners, and says her business and the cares of her family take up her whole time.' *Letters*, viii. 320. Kemble, who gave Boswell a minute of what passed at the interview with Johnson, says that the Doctor 'asked her which of Shakspeare's characters she was most pleased with. Upon her answering that she thought the character of Queen Catharine, in *Henry the Eighth*, the most natural :—"I think so too, Madam, (said he ;) and whenever you perform it, I will once more hobble out to the theatre myself."' *Life*, iv. 242.

Eighteen years earlier in his edition of *Shakespeare* (ed. 1765, v. 491) he had written :—'The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Catharine have furnished some scenes

I have

I have had this day a letter from Mr. Mudge; who, with all his earnestness for operation, thinks it better to wait the effects of time, and, as he says, to let well alone. To this the patient naturally inclines, though I am afraid of having the knife yet to endure when I can bear it less. Cruickshank was even now in doubt of the event; but Pott, though never eager, had, or discovered, less fear.

If I was a little cross, would it not have made patient Grisel cross, to find that you had forgotten the letter that you was answering? But what did I care, if I did not love you? You need not fear that another should get my kindness from you; that kindness which you could not throw away if you tried, you surely cannot lose while you desire to keep it.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

I have a letter signed S. A. Thrale; I take S. A. to be Miss Sophy: but who is bound to recollect initials? A name should be written, if not fully, yet so that it cannot be mistaken.

896.

TO MISS REYNOLDS¹.

MY DEAREST DEAR,

London, October 27, 1783.

I am able enough to write, for I have now neither sickness nor pain; only the gout has left my ancles somewhat weak.

While the weather favours you, and the air does you good, stay in the country: when you come home, I hope we shall often

which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Catharine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written.'

Horace Walpole wrote on January 15, 1788:—'I asked Mrs. Siddons in which part she would most wish me to see her. She named Portia in the *Merchant of Venice*; but I begged to

be excused. With all my enthusiasm for Shakespeare, it is one of his plays that I like the least. The story of the caskets is silly, and except the character of Shylock, I see nothing beyond the attainment of a mortal. Euripides, or Racine, or Voltaire might have written all the rest.' *Letters*, ix. 124.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 741.

see one another, and enjoy that friendship to which no time is likely to put an end on the part of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant.

SAM: JOHNSON.

897.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, Nov. 1, 1783.

You will naturally wish to know what was done by the robbers at the brewhouse². They climbed by the help of the lamp iron to the covering of the door, and there opening the window, which was never fastened, entered and went down to the parlour, and took the plate off the sideboard; but being in haste, and probably without light, they did not take it all. They then unlocked the street-door, and locking it again, carried away the key. The whole loss, as Mr. Perkins told me, amounts to near fifty pounds.

Mr. Pott bade me this day take no more care about the tumour. The gout too is almost well in spite of all the luxury to which my friends have tempted me by a succession of pheasants, partridges, and other delicacies. But Nature has got the better. I hope to walk to church to-morrow.

An air ballon has been lately procured by our virtuosi, but it performed very little to their expectation³.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 323.

² The following entries in the *Gentleman's Magazine* at this time show the dreadful state of the community:—

'October 28. Eleven malefactors were executed at Tyburn. Notwithstanding these numerous sacrifices to the justice of the country, no less than 160 criminals were to be tried at the Sessions at the Old Bailey that were to begin the very next day.' P. 973.

'November 1. To such a pitch of audacious villainy are the robbers about London arrived that ten of them armed with cutlasses and pistols, in two boats, boarded a vessel

near Union Stairs, Wapping, about two this morning and stole thereout two bales of woollens.' *Ib.*

'November 4. The Sessions for the City of London ended, when six convicts received sentence of death, which with twelve condemned on Saturday for Middlesex, make eighteen in all capitally convicted this Sessions. Villains increase so fast, that a bare recital of their names and atrocious crimes would more than fill our *Magazine*.' P. 974.

³ On, November 26 one made of yellow taffety was launched in the Artillery Ground, in the sight of an almost incredible number of people. No one ascended. *Ib.* p. 977.

The

The air with which these balls are filled, is procured by dissolving filings in the vitriolick (or I suppose sulphureous) acid¹; but the smoke of burnt straw may be used, though its levity is not so great.

If a case could be found at once light and strong, a man might mount with his will, and go whither the winds would carry him. The case of the ball which came hither was of goldbeaters' skin. The cases which have hitherto been used are apparently defective, for the ball came to the ground; which they could never do, unless there were some breach made.

How old is the boy that likes Rambler better than apples and pears?

I shall be glad of Miss Sophy's letter, and will soon write to S. A.; who, since she is not Sophy, must be Susy. Methinks it is long since I heard from Queency.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

898.

TO MRS. PORTER¹.

DEAR MADAM,

The death of poor Mr. Porter³, of which your maid has sent me an account, must have very much surprised you. The death of a friend is almost always unexpected: we do not love to think of it⁴, and therefore are not prepared for its coming. He was, I think, a religious man, and therefore that [*sic*] his end was happy.

Death has likewise visited my mournful habitation. Last month died Mrs. Williams⁵, who had been to me for thirty years in the place of a sister: her knowledge was great, and her conversation pleasing. I now live in cheerless solitude.

My two last years have passed under the pressure of successive diseases. I have lately had the gout with some severity. But I wonderfully escaped the operation which I mentioned, and am upon the whole restored to health beyond my own expectation.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 333, n. 2.

² First published in Malone's *Boswell*.

³ Her second brother. *Life*, i. 94, n. 3.

⁴ He probably wrote 'think on it.'

⁵ She had died on September 6—more than two months before.

As we daily see our friends die round us, we that are left must cling closer, and, if we can do nothing more, at least pray for one another; and remember, that as others die we must die too, and prepare ourselves diligently for the last great trial.

I am, Madam,

Yours affectionately, &c.,

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, Nov. 10, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

899.

DEAR SIR,

TO RICHARD JACKSON¹.

The Readership of the Temple² being vacant, I take the

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. Frederick Barker, of 41, Gunterstone Road, West Kensington, London.

The letter is not addressed, but at the foot is written in another hand, 'Richard Jackson, Esq.' Johnson spoke of Jackson as 'the all-knowing'; on which Boswell has the following note:—'A gentleman, who from his extraordinary stores of knowledge, has been stiled *omniscient*. Johnson, I think very properly, altered it to all-knowing, as it is a *verbum solenne*, appropriated to the Supreme Being.' *Life*, iii. 19.

Wraxall, who speaks of him as 'Omniscient Jackson,' says that he was an intimate friend of Lord Shelburne and a member of his Ministry. Wraxall's *Memoirs*, ed. 1815, ii. 61, 235. 'There was a silk gownsman,' said Bentham, 'who had never any business, but who went by the name of Omniscient Jackson. I gave the name to Macculloch (Dr) who was all omniscience, and *præterea nihil*.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 285.

Charles Lamb thus describes Jackson in *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*:—'Jackson—the omniscient Jackson he was called—was of this period. He had the reputation of

possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down *edge* bone of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical reasons as dismissed the mangle (for the time) learned and happy.'

² 'Since the reign of Henry VIII. there has been a divine belonging to this church, named a master or custos. Besides the master there is a reader, who reads divine service twice a day, at eight o'clock in the morning and at four in the afternoon.' Dodsley's *London and its Environs*, vi. 113. The Reader at this time would have but little help from the Master, Thomas Thurlow, who was also Dean of St. Paul's and Bishop of Lincoln. *Letters of Radcliffe and James*, p. 232, n. 1.

Mr. Hoole read the church-service to Johnson on his death-bed. *Life*, iv. 409.

liberty

liberty of entreating your Countenance and vote for Mr. Hoole, a young clergyman, whom I have known for a great part of his life, and whom I can confidently offer to your notice, as a Man of uncommon parts, and blameless character.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt-cour [*sic*] Fleet Street, Nov. 11, 1783.

900.

DEAR MADAM,

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

Since you have written to me with the attention and tenderness of ancient time, your letters give me a great part of the pleasure which a life of solitude admits. You will never bestow any share of your good will on one who deserves better. Those that have loved longest love best. A sudden blaze of kindness may by a single blast of coldness be extinguished, but that fondness which length of time has connected with with [*sic*] many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while [*be*] suppressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those that have lived long together, every thing heard and every thing seen recalls some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some petty quarrel, or some slight endearment. Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week, but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an *old friend* never can be found, and Nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost.

I have not forgotten the Davenants², though they seem to have forgotten me. I began very early to tell them what they have commonly found to be true. I am sorry to hear of their building. I have always warned those whom I loved, against that mode of ostentatious waste³.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 325. Corrected by me from the original in the possession of the late Mr. S.J. Davey, of

47, Great Russell Street, London.

² *Ante*, i. 333, n. 1.

³ *Ante*, i. 99.

You

You seem to mention Lord Kilmurray¹ as a stranger. We were at his house in Cheshire; and he one day dined with Sir Lynch. What he tells of the epigram is not true, but perhaps he does not know it to be false. Do not you remember how he rejoiced in having *no* park? He could not disoblige his neighbours by sending them *no* venison.

The frequency of death, to those who look upon it in the leisure of Arcadia², is very dreadful. We all know what it should teach us; let us all be diligent to learn. Lucy Porter has lost her brother. But whom I have lost—let me not now remember³. Let not your loss be added to the mournful catalogue. Write soon again to

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Nov. 13, 1783.

To Mrs. Thrale at Bath.

901.

TO MISS S. A. THRALE⁴.

DEAR MISS,

Here is a whole week, and nothing heard from your house. Baretti said what a wicked house it would be⁵, and a wicked house it is. Of you however I have no complaint to make, for

¹ When Johnson was at Combermere, he visited Lord Kilmorey's house—Shavington Hall, in Shropshire. 'He shewed the place with too much exultation,' he recorded. 'He has no park, and little water.' *Life*, v. 433.

² He had quoted Sidney's *Arcadia* a few weeks earlier. *Ante*, ii. 331.

³ He was thinking of that friend 'whose face for fifteen years had never been turned upon him but with respect and benignity—whose favour he enjoyed for almost a fourth part of his life.' *Life*, iv. 84-5. The ninth day after the date of Johnson's letter Miss Burney 'passed in nothing but sorrow—exquisite sorrow for my dear unhappy friend, who sent me one

letter that came early by the Bath Diligence and another by the post.' Her friend was Mrs. Thrale, whose unhappiness was caused by her struggles to overcome her love for Piozzi, to whom she had engaged herself in the spring of this year. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 285, and Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 105.

⁴ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 327.

Miss S. A. Thrale was Susanna Thrale, as is shown, *ante*, ii. 348. Of her alone of all Mrs. Thrale's children I have not been able to obtain a certificate of birth or baptism.

⁵ 'A hint I gave to Johnson, but he would not take it, because he never thought or would think of Piozzi.'—BARETTI.

I owe you a letter. Still I live here by my own self, and have had of late very bad nights; but then I have had a pig to dinner, which Mr. Perkins gave me. Thus life is chequered.

I cannot tell you much news, because I see nobody that you know. Do you read the *Tatlers*? They are part of the books which every body should read, because they are the sources of conversation¹, therefore make them part of your library. Bickerstaff, in the *Tatler*, gives as a specimen of familiar letters, an account of his cat². I could tell you as good things of Lily the white kitling, who is now at full growth, and very well behaved; but I do not see why we should descend below human beings, and of one human being I can tell something that you will like to hear.

A friend, whose name I will tell when your Mamma has tried to guess it, sent to my physician to enquire whether this long train of illness³ had brought me into any difficulties for want of money, with an invitation to send to him for what occasion required. I shall write this night to thank him⁴, having no need to borrow.

I have seen Mr. Seward since his return only once; he gave no florid account of my mistress's health⁵. Tell her that I

¹ 'It is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that the *Tatler* and *Spectator* had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolic and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect which they can never wholly lose, while they continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge.' Johnson's *Works*, vii. 430. The 'subsequent work' is *The Freeholder*, No. 45.

² Writing of his little dog and cat he says:—'They both of 'em sit by my fire every night, expecting my coming home with impatience; and at my entrance never fail of running up to me, and bidding me welcome, each of 'em in his proper language. As they have been bred up together from their infancy and seen no other

company, they have learned each other's manners, so that the dog often gives himself the airs of a cat, and the cat, in several of her motions and gestures, affects the behaviour of the little dog.' *The Tatler*, No. 112.

³ Johnson had perhaps in mind 'the train of ills' in Addison's *Cato*, Act iii. sc. 2.

⁴ See *Life*, iv. 245, for his letter to W. G. Hamilton, dated the next day.

⁵ Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney three months later:—'Mr. Seward's disapprobation [of her affection for Piozzi] is merely external, and by no means, like yours, the growth of his heart; but the coarseness of his expressions he has to himself, and I cannot guess how I have deserved them.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 306.

hearken every day after a letter from her¹, and do not be long before you write yourself to,

My dear,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

902.

TO MISS BURNEY².

MADAM,

You have been at home a long time, and I have never seen you nor heard from you. Have we quarreled?

I have sent a book which I have found lately, and imagine to be Dr. Burney's. Miss Charlotte³ will please to examine.

Pray write me a direction of Mrs. Chapone⁴, and pray

¹ Johnson gives as one definition of *hearken*, 'to listen by way of curiosity'; and quotes from *Richard III*, Act i. sc. 1, 'He hearkens after prophecies and dreams,' and from Rogers [? Dr. John Rogers] 'he hearkens after any expedient that offers to shorten his way to it.'

² From the original in the possession of Mrs. Haly, 25 Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, to whom it was given by a daughter of Admiral Burney—Miss Burney's brother. In Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 283, and in her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 356, an incorrect copy is given, which Miss Burney, not having the letter by her, wrote down from memory. She gives also her reply as follows:—

'DEAR SIR,

May I not say dear? for quarrelled I am sure we have not. The bad weather alone has kept me from waiting upon you; but now you have condescended to give me a summons, no lion shall stand in the

way of my making your tea this afternoon, unless I receive a prohibition from yourself, and then I must submit; for what, as you said of a certain great lady, signifies the barking of a lap-dog, if once the lion puts out his paw?

The book was very right. Mrs. Chapone lives at either No. 7 or 8 in Dean Street, Soho.

I beg you, Sir, to forgive a delay for which I can only "tax the elements with unkindness*," and to receive with your usual goodness and indulgence, your ever most obliged and most faithful humble servant,

F. BURNEY.

St. Martin's Street, Nov. 19, 1783.'

The 'great lady' was Mrs. Montagu. *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 357 note.

³ Charlotte Burney, afterwards Mrs. Broome. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, vi. 193.

⁴ Johnson wrote to Mrs. Chapone on the 28th. *Life*, iv. 247.

* *King Lear*, Act iii. sc. 2.

let me sometimes have the honour of telling you, how much I am,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt-court, Nov. 19, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON¹.

At the foot of this letter is written in Miss Burney's hand:—'F. B. flew to him instantly and most gratefully.'

903.

TO MISS BURNEY².

Mr. Johnson begs of Miss Burney that she will favour him with a copy of *Cecilia* to lend a friend.

Saturday.

¹ Miss Burney with an overstrained delicacy refused to allow Boswell to print Johnson's letters to her. 'One I have from him,' she writes, 'that is a masterpiece of elegance and kindness united. 'Twas his last.' Boswell, she says, called upon her when she was at Windsor, and begged for her help:—

"My help?"

"Yes, Madam; you must give me some of your choice little notes of the Doctor's; we have seen him long enough upon stilts; I want to show him in a new light. Grave Sam, and great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam,—all these he has appeared over and over. Now I want to entwine a wreath of the graces across his brow; I want to show him as gay Sam, agreeable Sam, pleasant Sam; so you must help me with some of his beautiful billets to yourself." She was too shy by nature to yield, and moreover at this time she was oppressed by the propriety of a Court. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, v. 167. See also *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, iii. 114.

² From the original in the possession of Mrs. E. V. Chappel, of East Orchard, Shaftesbury.

Cecilia was published in the summer of 1782, more than four years after Miss Burney's first novel *Evelina*. Boswell wrote to Mrs. Thrale from Edinburgh on December 20, 1782:—'Everybody here is running after *Cecilia*, and I am vain of telling that I have had the pleasure of being frequently in Miss Burney's company at Mrs. Thrale's.' *From an Autograph Letter in the possession of the late Mr. S. J. Davey*. He had met her six months earlier in Johnson's house. 'I mentioned *Cecilia*. JOHNSON (with an air of animated satisfaction). "Sir, if you talk of *Cecilia*, talk on."' *Life*, iv. 223. Mrs. Barbauld wrote to her brother on January 2, 1784:—'Next to the balloon, Miss B. is the object of public curiosity. She is a very unaffected, modest, sweet, and pleasing young lady;—but you, now I think of it, are a Goth, and have not read *Cecilia*.' Barbauld's *Works*, ii. 23. Horace Walpole wrote on September 17, 1785:—'Dr. Burney and his daughter *Evelina-Cecilia*, have passed a day and a half with me. He is lively and agreeable, she half-and-half sense and modesty, which possess her so entirely that not a cranny is left for

TO

904.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

You desire me to write often, and I write the same day, and should be sorry to miss any thing that might give you ease or pleasure².

From the fatigue of your journey no harm, I hope, will ensue. Exercise short of great fatigue must be your great medicine, but painful weariness I would wish you to avoid³. You will do well, if you have recourse again to milk, which once restored you beyond expectation, and will now perhaps help you again⁴.

It does not appear from your Doctor's prescription that he sees to the bottom of your distemper. What he gives you strikes at no cause, and is only intended for an occasional exciter of the stomach.

Exercise yourself every morning, and when you can catch a momentary appetite, have always something ready. Toast and hot wine will be good, or a jelly, or potted meats, or anything that can be eaten without trouble, and dissolves of itself by warmth and moisture. Let nothing fret you; Care is all [? always] a slow, and may now be to you a quick poison. No worldly thing but your health is now worth your thought, if any thing troublesome occurs, drive it away without a parley. If I were with you, perhaps I might help to keep you easy, but we are at a great distance.

I do not think that you have so much to hope from physick as from regimen. Keep a constant attention to petty conveniencies. Suffer neither heat nor cold in a disagreeable degree. Beware of costiveness. Take the air every morning, and very often let me know how you do, and what you eat or drink and how you rest.

affection or pretension.' *Letters*, ix. 13. More than forty years later, on November 18, 1826, Sir Walter Scott describes her as 'an elderly lady, with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, a pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick

feelings.' Lockhart's *Scott*, ed. 1839, ix. 50.

¹ From the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., of 5 Pall Mall East.

² Dr. Taylor was ill. *Post*, p. 357.

³ *Ante*, ii. 99, 102.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 234, 236.

My nights are restless, but my sarcocele¹ gives me no trouble, and the gout is gone, and my respiration when I am up not uneasy.

Let us pray for one another.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Nov. 19, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

905.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON.

[London], November 19, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 245.

906.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 20, 1783.

I began to grieve and wonder that I had no letter, but not being much accustomed to fetch in evil by circumspection or anticipation, did not suspect that the omission had so dreadful a cause as the sickness of one of my dears. As her physician thought so well of her when you wrote, I hope she is now out of danger. You do not tell me her disease; and perhaps have not been able yourself fully to understand it. I hope it is not of the cephalick race³.

That frigid stillness with which my pretty Sophy melts away, exhibits a temper very incommodious in sickness, and by no means amiable in the tenour of life⁴. Incommunicative taciturnity neither imparts nor invites friendship⁵, but reposes on a stubborn sufficiency self-centered, and neglects the interchange of that

¹ *Ante*, ii. 335.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 329.

³ Johnson defines *cephalick* as 'that which is medicinal to the head.' He does not give a definition which includes 'that which pertains to the head.' What he dreaded was an illness of the same kind as that which had carried off many of Mrs. Thrale's children.

⁴ Johnson in *The Idler*, No. 103, has 'an even and unvaried tenour of life.' When he wrote this he perhaps had in his mind 'the noiseless tenour of their way' of Gray's *Elegy*.

⁵ 'This is the present case of Hetty [Miss Thrale—Queeney] rather than Sophy.' BARETTI.

social officiousness¹ by which we are habitually endeared to one another. They that mean to make no use of friends, will be at little trouble to gain them; and to be without friendship, is to be without one of the first comforts of our present state. To have no assistance from other minds, in resolving doubts, in appeasing scruples, in balancing deliberations, is a very wretched destitution. If therefore my loves have this silence by temper, do not let them have it by principle; show them that it is a perverse and inordinate disposition, which must be counteracted and reformed. Have I said enough?

Poor Dr. Taylor represents himself as ill; and I am afraid is worse than in the summer. My nights are very bad; but of the sarcocele I have now little but the memory.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

907.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².

You desired me to write often, and I now write though I have nothing new to tell you, for I know that in the tediousness of ill health a letter always gives some diversion to the mind, and I am afraid that you live too much in solitude.

[I] feel the weight of solitude very pressing; after a night of broken and uncomfortable slumber I rise to a solitary breakfast, and sit down in the evening with no companion³. Sometimes however I try to read more and more.

¹ Johnson defines *officiousness* as 'forwardness of civility, or respect, or endeavour. Commonly in an ill sense.' Mrs. Piozzi, criticising the line in which he praises Levett as

'Officious, innocent, sincere,' says:—'Johnson, always thinking neglect the worst misfortune that could befall a man, looked on a character of this description with less aversion than I do.' *British Synonymy*, ii. 79. She did not understand that he used *officious* in the

sense of 'kind; doing good offices,' and not in the sense of 'importunately forward.'

² First published in *Notes and Queries*, 6th S. v. 482.

³ Levett had 'always waited upon him every morning, through the whole course of his late and tedious breakfast,' and with Mrs. Williams he had always taken tea, however late he might be in coming home. *Life*, i. 243, 421.

You

You must likewise write to me and tell me how you live, and with what diet. Your milk kept you so well that I know not why you forsook it, and think it very reasonable to try it again¹. Do not omit air and gentle exercise.

The ministry talk of laying violent hands on the East India company, even to the abolition or at least suspension of their charter². I believe corruption and oppression are in India at an enormous height, but it has never appeared that they were promoted by the Directors, who, I believe, see themselves defrauded, while the country is plundered; but the distance puts their officers out of reach³, and I doubt whether the government, in its present state of diminished credit, will do more than give another evidence of its own imbecillity [*sic*]⁴.

You and I however have more urgent cares, than for the East Indian company. We are old and unhealthy. Let us do what we can to comfort one another.

I am, dear Sir, &c.,

London, Nov. 22, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Rev. Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

908.

DEAR SIR,

TO SIR JOHN HAWKINS⁵.

As Mr. Ryland was talking with me of old friends and past

¹ *Ante*, ii. 355.

² On November 20, Fox had brought in his East India Bill, 'a singularly bold and original plan for the government of the British territories in India. What was proposed was that the whole authority, which till that time had been exercised over those territories by the East India Company, should be transferred to seven Commissioners who were to be named by Parliament, and were not to be removable at the pleasure of the Crown.' Macaulay's *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. 1871, p. 406.

³ 'All distant power,' said Johnson, 'is bad. I am clear that the best plan for the government of India is a despotick governour; for if he be a good man, it is evidently the best

government; and supposing him to be a bad man, it is better to have one plunderer than many.' *Life*, iv. 213.

⁴ Johnson showed more foresight than Horace Walpole, who wrote early in December:—'Mr. Fox's competitor, Mr. Pitt, appears by no means an adequate rival. . . . The opponents of the Bill have no hopes but in the House of Lords, where however I do not believe they expect to succeed. Mr. Pitt's reputation is much sunk.' *Letters*, viii. 437-9. On December 19 Pitt became First Lord of the Treasury, and formed that Ministry which lasted seventeen years.

⁵ First published in Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, page 562.

Hawkins records that Johnson said times.

times, we warmed ourselves into a wish, that all who remained of the Club should meet and dine at the house which once was Horseman's, in Ivy-lane. I have undertaken to solicit you, and therefore desire you to tell on what day next week you can conveniently meet your old friends.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt-court, Nov. 22, 1783.

SAM: JOHNSON.

909.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 24, 1783.

The post came in late to-day, and I had lost hopes. If the distress of my dear little girl keep me anxious, I have much consolation from the maternal and domestick character of your dear letters.

I do not much fear her pretty life, because scarcely any body dies of her disorder; but it is an unpromising entry upon a new period of life: and there is, I suspect, danger lest she should have to struggle for some years with a tender, irritable, and as it is not very properly called, a nervous constitution². But we will hope better; and please ourselves with thinking that nature, or

to him this month:—'What a man am I, who have got the better of three diseases, the palsy, the gout, and the asthma, and can now enjoy the conversation of my friends without the interruptions of weakness or pain!' It was, in what Hawkins calls 'this seeming spring-tide of his health and spirits' that Johnson wrote this Letter. The old Club 'had been formed in the winter of 1749, and had met weekly at the King's Head, a famous beef-steak house in Ivy-lane, near St. Paul's, every Tuesday evening.' *Ib.* p. 219, and *Life*, i. 190; iv. 253, 435. 'Ivy-lane runs from Paternoster Row into Newgate Street. This lane took its name from the Ivy which grew on the walls of the prebends' houses,

formerly situated here. *Stow*. Dodsley's *London and its Environs*, iii. 265. Goldsmith in his *Essay on Clubs* says:—'If a man be phlegmatic he may sit in silence at the hum-drum club in Ivy-lane.' Goldsmith's *Works*, ed. 1801, iv. 302. According to a writer in the *Builder* (December, 1884), 'The King's Head was burnt down twenty-five years ago, but the cellarage remains beneath No. 4, Aldis's dining-rooms, on the eastern side.'

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 331.

² Johnson in his *Dictionary* gives as the second meaning of *nervous*, 'relating to the nerves; having the seat in the nerves. [In medical cant] Having weak or diseased nerves.'

physick,

physick, will gain a complete victory; that dear Sophy will quite recover, and that she and her sister will love one another one degree more for having felt and excited pity, for having wanted and given help.

I received yesterday from your physicians a note, from which I received no information; they put their heads together to tell me nothing. Be pleased to write punctually yourself, and leave them to their trade. Let me have something every post till my dear Sophy is better.

My nights are often very troublesome, so that I try to sleep in the day. The old convulsions of the chest have a mind to fasten their fangs again upon me. I am afraid that winter will pinch me. But I will struggle with it, and hope to hold out yet against heat and cold.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

910.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 27, 1783.

I had to-day another trifling letter from the physicians. Do not let them fill your mind with terrours which perhaps they have not in their own; neither suffer yourself to sit forming comparisons between Sophy and her dear father; between whom there can be no other resemblance, than that of sickness to sickness. Hystericks and apoplexies have no relation. Hystericks commonly cease at the times when apoplexies attack; and very rarely can be said to shorten life. They are the bugbears of disease, of great terror but little danger.

Mrs. Byron² has been with me to-day to enquire after Sophy; I sent her away free from the anxiety which she brought with her.

Do however what the Doctors order; they know well enough what is to be done. My pretty Sophy will be well, and Bath will ring with the great cure.

I am, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 332.

² *Ante*, ii. 79.

911.

TO MRS. CHAPONE.

[London], November 28, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 247.

912.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Nov. 29, 1783.

The life of my dear, sweet, pretty, lovely, delicious Miss Sophy is safe; let us return thanks to the great Giver of existence, and pray that her continuance amongst us may be a blessing to herself and to those that love her. *Multos et felices*, my dear girl².

Now she is recovered, she must write me a little history of her sufferings, and impart her schemes of study and improvement³. Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression; we must always purpose to do more or better than in time past. The mind is enlarged and elevated by mere purposes, though they end as they begin by airy contemplation. We compare and judge, though we do not practise⁴.

She will go back to her arithmetick again; a science which will always delight her more, as by advancing further she discerns more of its use, and a science devoted to Sophy's ease of mind; for you told in the last winter that she loved metaphysicks more than romances. Her choice is certainly as laudable as it is uncommon; but I would have her like what is good in both.

God bless you and your children; so says,

Dear Madam,

Your old Friend,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 334.

² 'And so say I.' BARETTI. Their prayer that many happy years might fall to her lot was only granted in part. 'She died on November 8, 1824, at Sandgate, the wife of Henry Merrick Hoare. She never had any children.' MS. note in the copy of the *Piozzi Letters* which had belonged to Baretti.

³ For Johnson's 'schemes of life' see *ante*, ii. 300, n. 3.

⁴ Boswell quotes this passage. *Life*,

iv. 396, n. 4. With 'airy contemplation' compare line 10 in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, where the poet describes how man—

'Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good.'

In *Rasselas*, ch. 44, he says:—'No man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not sometimes tyrannise, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability.'

913.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ¹.

DEAR SIR,

Your Doctor's fixed air recommends him but little to my esteem²; I like Doxy's³ prescription better, and your own regimen better than either. By persevering in the use of milk, I doubt not but you will gain health enough to keep your residence⁴, and that we can consult at leisure what may be best for both. This is but at two months distance. If your health or safety could be much promoted by any attention of mine, I would come down, but my own sickliness makes me unwilling to be far from my Physicians, and unless I were sure of some considerable good, such a journey is not to be undertaken. If I come to you, I must go to Lichfield.

While milk agrees with you, do not be persuaded to forsake it. Go to bed, and rise, as Nature dictates, not by rule but according to convenience. Make your mind easy, and trust God.

My time passes uncomfortably. my nights have been of late spasmodick without opium and sleepless with it. I hope that when we meet we shall both be better⁵.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Nov. 29, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

¹ From the original. I have carelessly failed to record the name of the correspondent to whose kindness I owe a copy of this Letter.

² 'Carbonic acid was long known before its nature was understood. Black gave it the name of fixed air.' *Penny Cyclo.*, ed. 1836, vi. 282. In a review in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1773, p. 447, of Dr. Priestley's *Observations on different Kinds of Air* it is stated that 'the three terms in common use for distinguishing the different kinds of air are Fixed air, Mephitic and Inflammable.' The use which Taylor's doctor would have made of 'fixed air' is perhaps

explained in the same review, where mention is made of 'the effects of fixed air applied by way of clyster in the case of a putrid fever.' See *also ib.* p. 553.

³ See *ante*, ii. 129, n. 1, for mention of Garrick's niece, Miss Doxy.

⁴ He had to keep his residence as Prebendary of Westminster. *Life*, ii. 473.

⁵ In 1783, probably about this time, for it was when Johnson was very poorly, he dined with the Duke of Chaulnes at the Adelphi, as the following letter shows:—

'The Duke of Chaulnes' best compliments to Doctor Burney: he

TO

914.

TO MRS. PORTER.

London, November 29, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 256.

915.

TO SIR JOHN HAWKINS¹.

DEAR SIR,

In perambulating Ivy-lane, Mr. Ryland found neither our landlord Horseman nor his successor. The old house is shut up, and he liked not the appearance of any near it; he therefore bespoke our dinner at the Queen's Arms, in St. Paul's Church-yard², where, at half an hour after three, your company will be desired to-day by those who remain of our former society.

Your humble servant,

Dec. 3 [1783.]

SAM: JOHNSON.

desires the favour of his company to dinner with Doctor Johnson on Sunday next, between about three and four o'clock, which is the hour convenient to the excellent old Doctor, the best piece of man, indeed, that the Duke ever saw.' *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 338.

¹ First published in Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, page 563.

'With this invitation,' writes Hawkins, 'I cheerfully complied, and met all who could be mustered of our society, namely Johnson, Mr. Ryland, and Mr. Payne of the Bank. In the evening we regaled with coffee. At ten we broke up, much to the regret of Johnson, who proposed staying; but finding us inclined to separate, he left us with a sigh that seemed to come from his heart, lamenting that he was retiring to solitude and cheerless meditation.'

John Payne had been a bookseller, but was now Chief Accountant of the Bank. *Life*, i. 317, n. 1. 'He was,' says Isaac Reed, 'of a very diminutive appearance. Once Johnson in a gaiety of humour proposed to run

a race with him. Before they had run half the distance Johnson caught his little adversary up in his arms, and without any ceremony placed him upon the arm of a tree which was near, and then continued running as if he had met with a hard match.' Croker's *Boswell*, ed. 1835, x. 145.

² It was at the Queen's Arms that Johnson's City Club met, which was composed of men who were not *patriots*, collected for him by Mr. Hoole. *Life*, iv. 87. Jeremy Bentham was a member. 'Tasso Hoole,' he writes, 'was one of Dr. Johnson's lickspittles. He had, I think, a place at the East India House; and got money by plays and translations, which he got people to subscribe for. He even asked me for subscriptions, though he lived in style—asked me who lived in beggary! He got me to subscribe, and Chamberlain Clarke forced him to give back the money.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 184. For Hoole's generous conduct about one of his plays which had not succeeded, see *Life*, ii. 289, n. 3.

TO

916.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], December 4, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 253.

917.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Dec. 13, 1783.

I think it long since I wrote, and sometimes venture to hope that you think it long too. The intermission has been filled with spasms, opiates, sleepless nights, and heavy days. These vellications² of my breast shorten my breath; whether they will much shorten my life I know not, but I have been for some time past very comfortless. My friends here ever continue kind, and much notice is taken of me.

I had two pretty letters from Susy and Sophy, to which I will send answers, for they are two dear girls. You must all guess again at my friend³

I dined about a fortnight ago with three old friends; we had not met together for thirty years, and one of us thought the other⁴ grown very old. In the thirty years two of our set have died⁵; our meeting may be supposed to be somewhat

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 339.

From the day after that on which he wrote this letter he was confined to the house for 129 days. *Post*, Letters of March 10 and April 21, 1784.

² 'Vellication. Twitching; stimulation.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

³ *Ante*, ii. 352.

⁴ Johnson, I conjecture, wrote 'the others.' It was Hawkins perhaps who thought his friends grown old. 'I could not but compare our meeting,' he writes, 'to that of the four old men in the *Senile Colloquium* of Erasmus.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 563.

⁵ Johnson, *post*, p. 390, says that it was three and thirty years ago that the Club met, and that all the

members were alive but Hawkesworth and Dyer. The Club which Hawkins describes had ten members,—Johnson, Hawkins, Ryland, Payne, Barker, Salter, Dyer, M'Ghie, Bathurst and Hawkesworth. Of these the last six were dead. Hawkins adds that it was formed in the winter of 1749, and broke up about the year 1756. Hawkins's *Johnson*, pp. 219, 361. The difference between his account and Johnson's is irreconcilable. I conjecture that the Old Club was dissolved earlier than he states, and that a second was formed composed only of six members. According to Nichols (*Lit. Anec.* ix. 502) the Club was known as The Rambler Club. Perhaps this was a second Club.

tender.

tender. I boasted that I had passed the day with three friends, and that no mention had been made among any of us of the air balloon, which has taken full possession, with a very good claim, of every philosophical mind and mouth¹. Do you not wish for the flying coach²?

Take care of your own health, compose your mind, and you have yet strength of body to be well.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

918.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR³.

DEAR SIR,

Perhaps you wonder that I do not write. I am very severely crushed [? harassed] by my old spasm which suffers [? suffering] me to get no sleep in the night, necessarily condemns the day to sluggishness and restlessness. I am indeed exceedingly distressed.

I think you have chosen well, in taking a later month for yourself⁴, but I was sorry to miss you so long a time. I am

¹ Horace Walpole wrote a few days earlier:—*Balloons* occupy senators, philosophers, ladies, everybody. . . . All this may be very important; to me it looks somewhat foolish.' *Letters*, viii. 438. Benjamin Franklin wrote to Sir J. Banks from Passy near Paris on November 21:—'A few months since the Idea of Witches riding through the Air upon a Broomstick and that of Philosophers upon a bag of Smoke would have appeared equally impossible and ridiculous.' Messrs. Sotheby & Co.'s *Auction Catalogue*, March 11, 1886, Lot 1281. 'Beaucoup de gens qui se piquent de rester froids au milieu de l'enthousiasme public n'ont pas manqué de répéter: —"Mais quelle utilité retirera-t-on de ces expériences? A quoi bon cette découverte dont on fait tant de bruit." Le vénérable Franklin leur répond avec sa simplicité accou-

tumée:—"Eh! à quoi bon l'enfant qui vient de naître?"' *Mémoires Historiques*, &c. Par Grimm et Diderot, ed. 1814, iii. 66.

² Eight years later Darwin wrote in his *Economy of Vegetation*, i. 289:—

'Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd
Steam! afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the
rapid car;
Or on wide-waving wings expanded
bear
The flying-chariot through the fields
of air.'

³ From the original in the Dreer Autograph Collection belonging to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. I owe the copy to the kindness of Mr. John W. Jordan the Assistant Librarian.

⁴ The month, no doubt, in which he should reside as a Prebendary of Westminster.

indeed

indeed heavily loaded with distempers. Sometimes I fancy that exercise would help me, but exercise I know not how to get. Sometimes I think that a warmer climate would relieve me, but the removal requires a great deal of money. At present I subsist by opiates, and with them shall try to fight through the winter, and try something efficacious, if life be granted me, in the Spring. The [? sarcocoele] continues well. Write to what comfort you can. We are almost left alone.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Dec. 20, 1783.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

919.

TO MISS REYNOLDS¹.

December 23, 1783.

DEAREST MADAM,

You shall doubtless be very welcome to me on Christmas day. I shall not dine alone, but the company will all be people whom we can stay with or leave. I will expect you at three, if I hear no more. I am this day a little better².

I am, dear Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM JOHNSON.

I mean, do not be later than three; for as I am afraid I shall not be at church, you cannot come too soon.

920.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, December 24, 1783. Published in the *Life*, iv. 248.

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 744.

² Miss Burney recorded on December 16:—'I spent the afternoon with Dr. Johnson, who indeed is very ill, and whom I could hardly tell how to leave. But he is rather

better since, though still in a most alarming way. Indeed, I am very much afraid for him. He was very, very kind. Oh! what a cruel, heavy loss will he be!' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 293.

921.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Dec. 27, 1783.

The wearisome solitude of the long evenings did indeed suggest to me the convenience of a club in my neighbourhood, but I have been hindered from attending it by want of breath. If I can complete the scheme, you shall have the names and the regulations².

The time of the year, for I hope the fault is rather in the weather than in me, has been very hard upon me. The muscles of my breast are much convulsed. Dr. Heberden recommends opiates, of which I have such horror that I do not think of them but *in extremis*³. I was however driven to them last night for refuge, and having taken the usual quantity durst not go to bed, for fear of that uneasiness to which a supine posture exposes me, but rested all night in a chair with much relief, and have been to-day more warm, active, and cheerful.

You have more than once wondered at my complaint of solitude, when you hear that I am crowded with visits. *Inopem me copia fecit*⁴. Visitors are no proper companions in the chamber of sickness. They come when I could sleep or read, they stay till I am weary, they force me to attend when my mind calls for relaxation, and to speak when my powers will hardly actuate my tongue. The amusements and consolations of languor and depression are conferred by familiar and domestick companions, which can be visited or called at will, and can occasionally be quitted or dismissed, who do not obstruct accommodation⁵ by ceremony, or destroy indolence by awakening effort.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 340.

² For 'the little evening club in Essex Street, in the Strand,' see *Life*, iv. 253, 436.

³ Boswell records that having called on Johnson on March 23 in this year he found him relieved by opium. 'He however protested against it as a remedy that should be given with the utmost reluctance, and only in extreme necessity.' *Life*, iv. 171.

⁴ *Ante*, ii. 326. He had written

to Boswell three days earlier:—'I am now a little better. But sickness and solitude press me very heavily. I could bear sickness better if I were relieved from solitude.' *Ib.* iv. 249. The quotation is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, iii. 466.

⁵ *Accommodation* is a favourite word with Johnson. He defines it:—'1. Provision of conveniences. 2. In the plural, conveniences, things requisite to ease or refreshment.' In

Such

Such society I had with Levet and Williams ; such I had where—I am never likely to have it more¹.

I wish, dear Lady, to you and my dear girls many a cheerful and pious Christmas.

I am,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

922.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, Dec. 31, 1783.

Since you cannot guess, I will tell you that the generous man was Gerard Hamilton. I returned him a very thankful and respectful letter³.

Your enquiry about Lady Carlisle⁴ I cannot answer, for I

The Rambler, No. 145, he says:—‘The meanest artizan or manufacturer contributes more to the accommodation of life than the profound scholar and argumentative theorist.’ The Duke in *Measure for Measure*, Act iii. sc. 1, l. 13, reasoning with life says:—

‘Thou art not noble ;

For all the accommodations that
thou bear’st

Are nursed by baseness.’

See *Life*, v. 310, *n.* 3 for *accommodate*.

¹ Mme. D’Arblay records that some day in the autumn of this year she called on him. Hitherto he had never mentioned to her his fears about Mrs. Thrale. As she sat with him, ‘a sudden change from kind tranquillity to strong austerity took place in his countenance ; startled and affrighted she held her peace. A silence almost awful succeeded. Then see-sawing violently in his chair, as usual when he was big with any powerful emotion whether of pleasure or of pain, he seemed deeply moved ; but without looking at her, or speaking, he intently fixed his eyes upon the fire. Then suddenly

turning to her with an air of mingled wrath and woe he hoarsely ejaculated:—“Piozzi!” He evidently meant to say more ; but the effort with which he articulated that name robbed him of any voice for amplification, and his whole frame grew tremulously convulsed. At length, and with great agitation, he broke forth with:—“She cares for no one. You, only—you, she loves still. But no one—and nothing else. You she still loves—.” A half smile now, though of no very gay character, softened a little the severity of his features, while he tried to resume some cheerfulness in adding:—“as—she loves her little finger.” He saw how distressing was the theme to a hearer whom he ever wished to please, not distress ; and he named Mrs. Thrale no more.’ *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 358-63. (I have abridged the account.)

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 342.

³ *Life*, iv. 245, and *ante*, ii. 352, 364.

⁴ The wife of the fifth Earl of Carlisle and daughter of the first Marquis of Stafford.

never

never saw her, unless perhaps without knowing her at a conversation¹.

Sir Joshua has just been here, and knows nothing of Miss Bingham; if one of Lord Lucan's daughters be meant, the eldest is now Lady Spencer; she is languishing in France with a diseased leg, and the third is a child².

Pray send the letter which you think will divert me, for I have much need of entertainment; spiritless, infirm, sleepless and solitary, looking back with sorrow and forward with terror:—but I will stop.

Barry of Ireland had a notion that a man's pulse wore him out³; my beating breast wears out me. The physicians yesterday covered it with a blister, of which the effect cannot yet be known⁴. Good God prosper their endeavours! Heberden is of opinion that while the weather is oppressive we must palliate.

In the mean time I am well fed; I have now in the house pheasant, venison, turkey and ham, all unbought. Attention and respect give pleasure, however late or however useless. But they are not useless when they are late; it is reasonable to rejoice, as the day declines, to find that it has been spent with the approbation of mankind⁵.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 105, n. 4.

² For Johnson's acquaintance with Lord Lucan's family see *ante*, ii. 65, *nn.* 4, 9. Gibbon, writing from Lausanne on September 5, 1785 about his English visitors says:—'Those who have repaid me for the rest were Lord and Lady Spencer. He is a valuable man, and where he is familiar a pleasant companion; she a charming woman, who with sense and spirit has the simplicity and playfulness of a child.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, ii. 384. Jones composed an Ode on their marriage, of which Horace Walpole wrote:—'If it is not perfect, still the eighth, ninth and tenth stanzas have merit enough to shock Dr. Johnson, and such sycophant old nurses, and that is enough for me. How precious is any line of De-

mosthenes that offended King Philip and the whole Court of Macedon!' *Letters*, viii. 74.

³ 'His notion was that pulsation occasions death by attrition; and that therefore the way to preserve life is to retard pulsation.' *Life*, iii. 34.

⁴ Miss Burney records:—'Tuesday, December 30. I spent the evening with Dr. Johnson. There were some very disagreeable people with him; and he once affected me very much by turning suddenly to me, and grasping my hand, and saying:—'The blister I have tried for my breath has betrayed some very bad tokens; but I will not terrify myself by talking of them; ah, *priez Dieu pour moi*.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 295.

⁵ 'Our uncertainty concerning our

The ministry is again broken, and to any man who extends his thoughts to national consideration the times are dismal and gloomy¹. But to a sick man what is the publick?

The new year is at hand; may God make it happy to me, to you, to us all, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen².

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

923.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR³.

I was intending to write to you, to quarrel with your silence, when waking after a short sleep in my chair, I found your kind letter lying on the table.

Since your Milk has restored you, let it preserve you, do not forsake it again for any length of time. As for me I know not on which side to turn me, I am irregular in nothing. My breast is now covered with a blister, which is, I believe, to be kept open; it gives no pain, and perhaps has hitherto produced no benefit, for though I have not since its application, suffered anything from Spasms, I have never been without opium, and therefore

own merit, and our anxiety to think favourably of it, should together naturally enough make us desirous to know the opinion of other people concerning it; to be more than ordinarily elevated when that opinion is favourable.' Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. 1801, i. 259.

¹ To Boswell he had written a week earlier:—'The present dreadful confusion of the publick ought to make you wrap yourself up in your hereditary possessions, which, though less than you may wish, are more than you can want; and in an hour of religious retirement return thanks to GOD, who has exempted you from any strong temptation to faction, treachery, plunder, and disloyalty.'

Life, iv. 249. Earl Temple, who on the 19th entered Pitt's Ministry as Secretary of State, had resigned on the 22nd. *Parl. Hist.* xxiv. 227. 'The heart of the young minister, stout as it was, almost died within him. He could not once close his eyes on the night which followed Temple's resignation.' Macaulay's *Misc. Works*, ed. 1871, p. 407.

² In Messrs. Sotheby & Co.'s Auction Catalogue of May 10, 1875, Lot 119 is 'a beautiful and most pious prayer in the autograph of Dr. Johnson, dated January 1, p.m. 11, 1784.' It was sold for eight guineas.

³ From the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison, of Font-hill House.

know

know not, which has helped me; nor am I helped much, for in bed I scarce get any sleep; what I have is in a chair. Dr. Heberden tells me that I must be content to support myself by opiates in the winter, and try to get better help in hotter weather.

In spring I have a desire of trying milk somewhere in the country. My lower parts begin to swell. May we all be received to mercy.

— There is likely to be a vacancy soon in Wicher's Alms-houses in Chappel street¹, which it will [be] your Dean's turn to fill up. A poor relation of mine wants a habitation. His name is Heely. I intend to ask Dr. Bell's interest, and if you [think] it proper, wish you would write to the Dean in Heely's favour².

I wish us both a happy year.

I am, Sir,

Affectionately yours,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Jan. 3, 1784.

Write soon and often.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

924.

TO CHARLES DILLY.

[London], January 6, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 257.

925.

DEAR MADAM, TO MRS. THRALE³. London, Jan. 12, 1784.

If, as you observe, my former letter was written with trepidation, there is little reason, except the habit of enduring, why

¹ Chapel Street, Broad Way, Westminster. Dodsley's *London*, ii. 90. 'Your Dean' was the Dean of Westminster. For Dr. Bell see *ante* i. 118.

² For Heely see *ante*, i. 306. He was elected to the Almshouse. Hawkins visited him there, and was informed by him that 'the endowment yielded him an allowance of half-a-crown a week, and half a chaldron of coals at Christmas.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 602. Boswell, properly censuring the unjust charge brought

against Johnson by Hawkins of neglecting this man, says:—'Sir John chooses to call him a *relation* of Dr. Johnson's.' *Life*, iv. 370. Johnson however here speaks of him as 'a poor relation of mine.' *Relation* he defines as a *person related by birth or marriage*. Heely's second marriage, especially as he had no children by his first wife, Johnson's cousin, did, as Boswell says, dissolve the connection.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 344.

this should shew more steadiness. I am confined to the house ; I do not know that any things grow better ; my physicians direct me to combat the hard weather with opium ; I cannot well support its turbulence, and yet cannot forbear it, for its immediate effect is ease ; having kept me waking all the night it forces sleep upon me in the day, and recompenses a night of tediousness with a day of uselessness. My legs and my thighs grow very tumid¹ : in the mean time my appetite is good, and if my physicians do not flatter me death is [not] rushing upon me². But this is in the hand of God.

The first talk of the sick is commonly of themselves ; but if they talk of nothing else, they cannot complain if they are soon left without an audience.

You observe, Madam, that the ballon engages all mankind, and it is indeed a wonderful and unexpected addition to human knowledge³ ; but we have a daring projector, who, disdaining the help of fumes and vapours, is making better than Dædalean wings, with which he will master the ballon and its companions as an eagle masters a goose. It is very seriously true that a subscription of eight hundred pounds has been raised for the wire and workmanship of iron wings⁴ ; one pair of which, and I think a tail, are now shown in the Haymarket, and they are making another pair at Birmingham. The whole is said to weigh two hundred pounds—no specious preparation for flying, but there are those who expect to see him in the sky. When I can leave the house I will tell you more.

¹ *Tumid* is one of 'the three uncommon or learned words' which Boswell discovers in the *Lives of the Poets*. Johnson describes Walder's legs as growing *tumid*. *Life*, iv. 39.

² I have inserted *not* which clearly seems omitted. See the next letter for Dr. Heberden's favourable report of his state.

³ Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney from Bath on January 15 :— 'Air balloons go no faster than post-horses at last. I caught my death almost by looking at one the other

day which went to Bristol in an hour from hence. I dare say Sir John Lade's phaeton would have beaten our Icarus out of sight.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 300.

⁴ Johnson, in *Rasselas*, ch. vi, in 'A Dissertation on the Art of Flying,' had ridiculed the invention of wings. 'In a year,' he writes, 'they were finished, and on a morning appointed the maker appeared, furnished for flight, on a little promontory: he waved his pinions awhile to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake.'

I had

I had the same old friends to dine with me on Wednesday¹, and may say that since I lost sight of you I have had one pleasant day.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Pray send me a direction to Sir — Musgrave in Ireland².

926.

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, Jan. 21, 1784.

Dr. Heberden this day favoured me with a visit ; and after hearing what I had to tell him of miseries and pains, and comparing my present with my past state, declared me well. That his opinion is erroneous, I know with too much certainty; and yet was glad to hear it, as it set extremities at a greater distance : he who is by his physician thought well, is at least not thought in immediate danger. They therefore whose attention to me makes them talk of my health, will, I hope, soon not drop, but lose their subject. But, alas ! I had no sleep last night, and sit now panting over my paper. *Dabit Deus his quoque finem*⁴. I have really hope from spring ; and am ready, like Almanzor, to bid the sun *fly swiftly*, and *leave weeks and months behind him*⁵. The sun has looked for six thousand years upon the world to little purpose, if he does not know that a sick man is almost as impatient as a lover.

Mr. Cator gives such an account of Miss Cecy⁶, as you and all

¹ *Ante*, ii. 364.

² Sir Richard Musgrave. *Ante*, ii. 295, n. 1.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 346.

⁴ 'This too the gods shall end.'

Æneid i. 199.

Windham, who called on him this day, found him too ill to admit him ; as was the case also on the 24th and 25th. Windham's *Diary*, p. 2.

⁵ Almanzor's speech is at the end of Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* :—

'Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace ;

Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.'

Johnson no longer says, as he had said twenty-five years earlier in the strength of his manhood, that 'the distinction of seasons is produced only by imagination operating on luxury. To temperance every day is bright.' *The Idler*, No. xi.

⁶ For Mr. Cator, one of Mr. of

of us must delight to hear; Cator has a rough, manly, independent understanding, and does not spoil it by complaisance; he never speaks merely to please, and seldom is mistaken in things which he has any right to know. I think well of her for pleasing him, and of him for being pleased; and at the close¹, am delighted to find him delighted with her excellence. Let your children, dear Madam, be *his* care, and *your* pleasure; close your thoughts upon them, and when sad fancies are excluded, health and peace will return together.

I am, dear Madam,

Your old Friend,

SAM: JOHNSON.

927.

TO MR. PERKINS.

[London], January 21, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 257.

928.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR².
DEAR SIR,

I am still confined to the house, and one of my amusements is to write letters to my friends, though they, being busy in the common scenes of life, are not equally diligent in writing to me. Dr. Heberden was with me two or three days ago, and told me that nothing ailed me, which I am glad to hear, though I knew it not to be true. My nights are restless, my breath is difficult, and my lower parts continue tumid.

The struggle, you see, still continues between the two sets of ministers: those that are *out* and *in* one can scarce call them, for who is *out* or *in* is perhaps four times a day a new question³.

Thrale's executors, see *ante*, i. 355, n. 7. Cecy is Mrs. Thrale's daughter, Caccia. She did not die till seventy-three years after this good account was given of her.

¹ '*At the close*' is, I think, a very uncommon expression for *in short* or *in fine*.

² First published in my edition of

the *Life*, vol. iv, page 260, from the original in the possession of Mr. M. M. Holloway of Hillbrow, Streatham.

³ Pitt had come into office on December 19 of the previous year, not by a vote of the House of Commons, but by the favour of the King. *Ante*, ii. 370, n. 1. 'His contest against the House of Commons

The

The tumult in government is, I believe, excessive, and the efforts of each party outrageously violent, with very little thought on any national interest, at a time when we have all the world for our enemies, when the King and parliament have lost even the titular dominion of America¹, and the real power of Government every where else. Thus Empires are broken down when the profits of administration are so great, that ambition is satisfied with obtaining them, and he that aspires to greatness needs do nothing more than talk himself into importance. He has then all the power which danger and conquest used formerly to give; he can raise a family and reward his followers.

Mr. Burke has just sent me his Speech upon the affairs of India, a volume of above a hundred pages closely printed². I will look into it; but my thoughts seldom now travel to great distances.

I would gladly know when you think to come hither, and whether this year you will come or no. If my life be continued, I know not well how I shall bestow myself.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

‘London, Jan. 24, 1784.’

‘To the Rev. Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

lasted from the 17th of December, 1783, to the end of March, 1784. In sixteen divisions the opposition triumphed. Again and again the King was requested to dismiss his ministers. But he was determined to go to Germany rather than yield.’ Macaulay’s *Misc. Works*, ed. 1871, p. 407. Horace Walpole wrote on February 2 :—‘Once or twice a week there is a day which it is said will be decisive. *To-day* is in that number; yet I expect it so little, that I am writing to you at ten at night, without inquiring whether the House of Commons, where action was expected, is up, without knowing what was to be there.’ *Letters*, viii. 453.

¹ By the first article of the Treaty of Peace signed at Paris on September 3, 1783. George III, ‘for himself,

his heirs and successors relinquished all claims to the government, propriety and territorial rights of the United States of America and every part thereof.’

² Burke’s Speech in the House of Commons on December 1, 1783, on Fox’s India Bill. *Parl. Hist.*, xxiii. 1312. It was published by Dodsley. In this speech describing the English rule in India he said :—‘England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it

To

929.

TO RICHARD CLARK.

[London], January 27, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 258.

930.

DEAR SIR, TO DR. HEBERDEN¹.

When you favoured me with your last visit, you left me full of cheerfulness and hope. But my Distemper prevails, and my hopes sink, and dejection oppresses me. I entreat you to come again to me and tell me if any hope of amendment remains and by what medicines or methods it may be promoted. Let me see you, dear Sir, as soon as you can.

I am, Sir,

Your most obliged and
most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt-court, Fleet Street, Feb. 6, 1784.

931.

DEAR MADAM, TO MRS. THRALE². London, Feb. 9, 1784.

The remission of the cold did not continue long enough to afford me much relief. You are, as I perceive, afraid of the opium; I had the same terrour, and admitted its assistance only under the pressure of insupportable distress, as of an auxiliary too powerful and too dangerous. But in this pinching season I cannot live without it; and the quantity which I take is less than it once was.

My physicians flatter me, that the season is a great part of my disease; and that when warm weather restores perspiration, this watery disease will evaporate. I am at least willing to flatter myself.

I have been forced to sit up many nights by an obstinate

had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion, by anything better than the ouran-outang or the tiger.¹ *Ib.* p. 1333.

¹ From the original in the posses-

sion of the Rev. C. G. Andrews, of Wouldham Rectory, Rochester, a great-grandson of Dr. Heberden.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 348.

sleeplessness,

sleeplessness, which makes the time in bed intolerably tedious, and which continues my drowsiness the following day. Besides, I can sometimes sleep erect, when I cannot close my eyes in a recumbent posture. I have just bespoke a flannel dress, which I can easily slip off and on, as I go into bed, or get out of it. Thus pass my days and nights in morbid wakefulness, in unseasonable sleepiness, in gloomy solitude, with unwelcome visitors, or ungrateful exclusions, in variety of wretchedness. But I snatch every lucid interval¹, and animate myself with such amusements as the time offers.

One thing which I have just heard, you will think to surpass expectation. The Chaplain of the factory at Petersburg relates, that the Rambler is now, by the command of the Empress, translating into Russian²; and has promised when it is printed to send me a copy.

¹ Johnson gives in his *Dictionary* examples of *lucid interval* from Bacon, Dryden, *The Tatler*, and Bentley. He defines it 'bright with the radiance of intellect; not darkened with madness.' Gibbon tells how he was sent to school 'in a lucid interval of comparative health.' *Misc. Works*, i. 31.

² The Chaplain was the Rev. William Tooke, author of *A view of the Russian Empire during the Reign of Catherine II.* Nichols introduced him to Johnson, and heard him tell him that 'translations of the *Rambler* and of Blackstone's *Commentaries* had been made into the Russian language by the especial command of the Empress.' Nichols's *Lit. Anec.*, ii. 553. Three months later, at the Essex-Head Club, 'Johnson called to us,' writes Boswell, 'with a sudden air of exultation, as the thought started into his mind, "O! Gentlemen, I must tell you a very great thing. The Empress of Russia has ordered the *Rambler* to be translated into the Russian language, so I shall be read on the banks of the Wolga.

Horace boasts that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone; now the Wolga is farther from me than the Rhone was from Horace." BOSWELL. "You must certainly be pleased with this, Sir." JOHNSON. "I am pleased, Sir, to be sure. A man is pleased to find he has succeeded in that which he has endeavoured to do." *Life*, iv. 276.

In this he was mistaken. *Rasselas* was translated into Russian in 1795, but the *Rambler* remains untranslated. *Ib.* vi. p. lxiv.

Among the subscribers to Mickle's *Lusiad* published in 1776 I find 'Basilius Nitikin, Esq., Gent. of Russia, St. Mary Hall, Oxford, and Mr. Prochore Suvoroff, Gent. of Russia, Queen's College, Oxford.'

Johnson defines *Factory* as '1. A house or district inhabited by traders in a distant country. 2. The traders embodied in one place.' Its modern sense of a *manufactory* is not given. *Manufactory* is not in his Dictionary. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1766, p. 385, where mention is made of the British Factory, the town is

Grant.

Grant, O Lord, that all who shall read my pages, may become more obedient to thy laws¹; and when the wretched writer shall appear before thee, extend thy mercy to him, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

932.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], February 11, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 259.

933.

TO THE REVEREND DR. HAMILTON².

SIR,

Bolt Court, Feb. 11, 1784.

My physicians endeavour to make me believe that I shall sometime be better qualified to receive visits from men of elegance and civility like yours.

Mrs. Pellé shall wait upon you, and you will judge what will be proper for you to do. I once more return you my thanks, and am,

Sir, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

934.

MADAM,

TO MRS. ROGERS³.

A very dangerous and enervating [*sic*] distemper admonishes me to make my will. One of my cares is for poor Phebe Herne,

called, as Johnson calls it, Petersburg and not St. Petersburg. See also *ib.*, p. 337.

¹ In his last *Rambler* he says:— 'It has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety. . . . I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue and confidence to truth.'

² First published in Croker's *Bos-*

well, page 758. For Dr. Hamilton see *ante*, ii. 296.

³ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 4th S. v. 442. Compared by me with the original in the possession of the Rev. Edward B. Edgell, of Bromham Rectory, Chippenham.

See *ante*, ii. 194, 206, for Johnson's Letters to Mrs. [Miss] Prowse, who had subsequently married the Rev. J. M. Rogers, about Phebe or Elizabeth Herne, a lunatic.

to whom your worthy Mother left so kind a legacy. When I am gone who shall pay the rest of her maintenance? I have not much to leave, but if you, Madam, will be pleased to undertake it, I can leave you an hundred pounds. But I am afraid that is hardly an equivalent, for my part has commonly amounted to twelve pounds or more. The payment to the house is eight shilling [*sic*] a week, and some cloaths [*sic*] must be had however few or coarse.

Be pleased, Madam, to let me know your resolution on my proposal, and write soon, for the time may be very short¹.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt Court, Fleet Street, Feb. 17, 1784.

935.

TO MRS. PORTER.

[London], February 23, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 261.

936.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, February 27, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 261.

¹ This letter shows by the handwriting how ill Johnson was. He did not complete his will till December 8, five days before his death. Mrs. Rogers sent the following answer:—

‘SIR, — I received your Letter yesterday with the most sincere concern, I hope it will please God yet to prolong a Life so valuable to the publick as well as to your private Friends; in the mean time your kind and generous desire to provide for those that must experience such a loss, ought I am sure to be complied [*sic*] with and Mr. Rogers desires me to inform you that he will accept of the hundred pounds, and will so far be answerable for Mrs. Hearne’s maintenance as to secure to her an annuity

[*sic*] of £23, instead of that we now pay her which will make a certain provision to her in case of accident to us. I name him instead of myself as all I am entitled to of course is his, and every business more easily settled by him [*sic*]. In case you should approve of this to save time and trouble, the necessary description will be the Revd. John Methuen Rogers of Berkley, Somerset. I beg leave to add our good wishes and to subscribe myself Sir,

‘Your faithful and

‘Obedient Servant,

‘MARY ROGERS.’

Endorsed:—

‘Dr. Johnson’s Letter and my answer. February 1784.’

TO

937.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], March 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 262.

938.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, March 10, 1784.

You know I never thought confidence with respect to futurity any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing; wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those faults, of which it is itself perhaps an aggravation; and goodness, always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficiency to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption, never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled, nor what is wanting in the crime supplied by penitence.

This is the state of the best, but what must be the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt, it can be no virtue to feign².

The sarcocoele ran off long ago, at an orifice made for mere experiment.

The water passed naturally, by God's mercy, in a manner of which Dr. Heberden has seen but few examples³. The

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 350.

Mrs. Thrale wrote to Miss Burney on February 18:—"Johnson is in a sad way doubtless; yet he may still with care last another twelvemonth, and every week's existence is gain to him who, like good Hezekiah, wearies Heaven with entreaties for life. I wrote him a very serious letter the other day." Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 305. She had much better have gone and 'exchanged confidence by the fireside' with him.

² Boswell quotes this passage.

Life, iv. 395. Hawkins says that calling on Johnson about this time he 'found him labouring under great dejection of mind. With a look that cut me to the heart he told me that he had the prospect of death before him, and that he dreaded to meet his Saviour. . . . He uttered this passionate exclamation:—"Shall I who have been a teacher of others myself be a castaway?"' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 564.

³ Boswell, who came up to London early in May, writes:—"One morning
chirurgion

chirurgion¹ has been employed to heal some excoriations; and four out of five are no longer under his cure. The physician laid on a blister, and I ordered, by their consent, a salve; but neither succeeded, and neither was very easily healed.

I have been confined from the fourteenth of December, and know not when I shall get out; but I have this day dressed me, as I was dressed in health.

Your kind expressions gave me great pleasure; do not reject me from your thoughts. Shall we ever exchange confidence by the fireside again?²

I hope dear Sophy is better; and intend quickly to pay my debt to Susy.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

939.

TO MRS. PORTER³.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

Bolt-court, 10th March, 1784.

I will not suppose that it is for want of kindness that you did not answer my last letter; and I therefore write again to tell you that I have, by God's great mercy, still continued to grow better. My asthma is seldom troublesome, and my dropsy

when I found him alone, he communicated to me, with solemn earnestness, a very remarkable circumstance which had happened in the course of his illness, when he was much distressed by the dropsy. He had shut himself up, and employed a day in particular exercises of religion,—fasting, humiliation, and prayer. On a sudden he obtained extraordinary relief, for which he looked up to Heaven with grateful devotion. He made no direct inference from this fact; but from his manner of telling it, I could perceive that it appeared to him as something more than an incident in the common course of events.¹ *Life*, iv. 271. Hawkins says that Johnson told him

that on that day 'he had ordered Frank not to admit any one to him, and, the better to enforce the charge, had added these awful words:—"For your master is preparing himself to die."' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 565.

¹ *Ante*, ii. 1, n. 4.

² A few days later Mrs. Thrale wrote from Bath to Miss Burney:—"My going to London would be a dreadful expense, and bring on a thousand inquiries and inconveniences—visits to Johnson and from Cator [one of Mr. Thrale's executors]; and where must I live for the time too?" Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 307.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 749.

has

has ran itself almost away, in a manner which my physician says is very uncommon.

I have been confined from the 14th of December, and shall not soon venture abroad ; but I have this day dressed myself as I was before my sickness.

If it be inconvenient to you to write, desire Mr. Pearson to let me know how you do, and how you have passed this long winter. I am now not without hopes that we shall once more see one another.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb and Miss Adey, and to all my friends, particularly to Mr. Pearson.

I am, my dear,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

940.

TO MRS. GASTRELL AND MISS ASTON¹.

DEAR LADIES,

The kind and speedy answer with which you favoured me to my last letter, encourages me to hope, that you will be glad to hear again that my recovery advances. My Disorders are an Asthma and Dropsy. The Asthma gives me no great trouble when I am not in motion, and the water of the dropsy has passed away in so happy a manner, by the Goodness of God, as Dr. Heberden declares himself not to have known more than four times in all his practice. I have been confined to the house from December the fourteenth, and shall not venture out till the weather is settled, but I have this day dressed myself as before I became ill. Join with me in returning thanks, and pray for me that the time now granted me may not be ill spent.

Let me now, dear Ladies, have some account of you. Tell me how the [*sic*] You, have endured this long and sharp winter², and

¹ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 750. Corrected by me from the original in Pembroke College Library.

² In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784, p. 306, under date of March 16 it is stated that in France 'the weather has driven the wolves in

many places even into the farm-yards, where they have done much mischief. The northern seas too, if the reports from Brest be true, have felt the unusual rigour of the season. Between Quimperley and Lauvau 33 whales have been taken.'

gives [*sic*] me hopes that we may all meet again with kindness and cheerfulness.

I am,

Dear Ladies,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

March 11, 1784.

941.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, March 16, 1784.

I am so near to health, as a month ago I despaired of being. The dropsy is almost wholly run away, and the asthma, unless irritated by cold, seldom attacks me. How I shall bear motion I do not yet know. But though I have little of pain, I am wonderfully weak. My muscles have almost lost all their spring; but I hope that warm weather, when it comes, will restore me. More than three months have I now been confined. But my deliverance has been very extraordinary.

Of one thing very remarkable I will tell you. For the asthma, and perhaps other disorders, my physicians have advised the frequent use of opiates. I resisted them as much as I could; and complained that it made me almost delirious. This Dr. Heberden seemed not much to heed; but I was so weary of it, that I tried, when I could not wholly omit it, to diminish the dose, in which, contrarily to the known custom of the takers of opium, and beyond what it seemed reasonable to expect, I have so far succeeded, that having begun with three grains, a large quantity, I now appease the paroxysm with a quarter of an ounce of diacodium², estimated an equivalent only to half a grain; and this quantity it is now eight days since I took.

That I may send to Mrs. Lewis³, for when I shall venture out I do not know, you must let me know where she may be found, which you omitted to tell me.

I hope my dear Sophy will go on recovering. But methinks

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 352.

² 'The syrup of poppies.' Johnson's *Dictionary*.

³ The wife or widow of John Lewis,

Dean of Ossory, who married one of Johnson's friends, Miss Cotterel. *Ante* ii. 310, *n.* 1, and *post*, p. 393.

Miss Thrale rather neglects me; suppose she should try to write me a little Latin letter.

Do you however write to me often, and write kindly; perhaps we may sometime see each other.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

942.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, March 18, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 264.

943.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, March 20, 1784.

Your last letter had something of tenderness. The accounts which you have had of my danger and distress were I suppose not aggravated. I have been confined ten weeks with an asthma and dropsy. But I am now better. God has in his mercy granted me a reprieve; for how much time his mercy must determine.

On the 19th of last month I evacuated twenty pints of water, and I think I reckon exactly; from that time the tumour has subsided, and I now begin to move with some freedom. You will easily believe that I am still at a great distance from health; but I am, as my chirurgeon expressed it, amazingly better. Heberden seems to have great hopes.

Write to me no more about *dying with a grace*; when you feel what I have felt in approaching eternity—in fear of soon hearing the sentence of which there is no revocation, you will know the folly²; my wish is, that you may know it sooner. The distance between the grave and the remotest point of human longevity, is but a very little; and of that little no path is certain.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 354.

² 'If he who considers himself as suspended over the abyss of eternal perdition only by the thread of life, which must soon part by its own weakness, and which the wing of

every minute may divide, can cast his eyes round him without shuddering with horror, or panting for security; what can he judge of himself, but that he is not yet awakened to sufficient conviction? &c.' *The Rambler*, No. 110.

You

You knew all this, and I thought that I knew it too; but I know it now with a new conviction¹. May that new conviction not be vain!

I am now cheerful; I hope this approach to recovery is a token of the Divine mercy. My friends continue their kindness. I give a dinner to-morrow.

Pray let me know how my dear Sophy goes on. I still hope that there is in her fits² more terrour than danger. But I hope, however it be, that she will speedily recover. I will take care to pay Miss Susy her letter. God bless you all.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

944.

TO MISS SUSY THRALE³.

MY DEAREST MISS SUSY,

London, Mar. 25, 1784.

Since you are resolved to stand it out, and keep *mum* till you have heard from me, I must at last comply; and indeed compliance costs me now no trouble, but as it irritates a cough, which I got, as you might have done, by standing at an open window⁴; and which has now harassed me many days, and is too strong for diacodium, nor has yet given much way to opium itself. However, having been so long used to so many worse things, I mind it but little. I have not bad nights; and my stomach has never failed me. But when I shall go abroad again, I know not.

With Mr. Herschel it will certainly be very right to cultivate

¹ Cowper, whose mind took a deeper gloom from religion than even Johnson's, wrote on May 10 to the Rev. John Newton:—"We rejoice in the account you give us of Dr. Johnson. His conversion will indeed be a singular proof of the omnipotence of Grace; and the more singular, the more decided." Southey's *Cowper*, xv. 150.

² She was hysterical. *Ante*, ii. 360-1.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 356.

⁴ Boswell, writing of Johnson's 'particularities' eleven years earlier, says:—"He sets open a window in the coldest day or night, and stands before it. It may do with his constitution; but most people, amongst whom I am one, would say, with the frogs in the fable, 'This may be sport to you; but it is death to us.'" *Life*, v. 306.

an acquaintance ; for he can show you in the sky what no man before him has ever seen, by some wonderful improvements which he has made in the telescope¹. What he has to show is indeed a long way off, and perhaps concerns us but little ; but all truth is valuable, and all knowledge is pleasing in its first effects, and may be subsequently useful. Of whatever we see we always wish to know ; always congratulate ourselves when we know that of which we perceive another to be ignorant. Take therefore all opportunities of learning that offer themselves, however remote the matter may be from common life or common conversation². Look in Herschel's telescope ; go into a chymist's laboratory ; if you see a manufacturer at work, remark his operations. By this activity of attention, you will find in every place diversion and improvement³.

Now dear Sophy is got well, what is it that ails my mistress ? She complains, and complains, I am afraid, with too much cause ; but I know not distinctly what is her disorder⁴. I hope that time and a quiet mind will restore her.

I am, my dearest,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Horace Walpole wrote on July 4, 1785 :—' Mr. Herschel has discovered that the Milky Way is not only a mob of stars, but that there is another dairy of them still farther off, whence I conclude comets are nothing but pails returning from milking, instead of balloons filled with inflammable air, which must by this time have made terrible havoc in such thickets of worlds, if at all dangerous.' *Letters*, viii. 569. Miss Burney, who met Herschel in 1786, says :—' He has not more fame to awaken curiosity than sense and modesty to gratify it. . . . He has discovered 1,500 universes.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, iii. 129, 262.

² 'It is evident that the earliest searchers after knowledge must have proposed knowledge only as their

reward, and that science, though perhaps the nursling of interest, was the daughter of curiosity.' *The Rambler*, No. 103. 'Sir,' (said Dr. Johnson) 'a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind ; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge.' *Life*, i. 458.

³ 'I have enlarged my notions,' he recorded, after seeing some iron and copper-works. *Life*, v. 442. In looking over the silk-mill at Derby he taught Boswell 'not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art.' *Ib.* iii. 164.

⁴ Miss Burney wrote in the previous November :—' Dr. Pepys had a long private conference with me concerning Mrs. Thrale, with whose real state

945.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London], March 27, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 267.

946.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

London, March 30, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 265.

947.

TO OZIAS HUMPHRY.

[London], April 5, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 268.

948.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

April 8, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 267.

949.

TO OZIAS HUMPHRY.

[London], April 10, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 269.

950.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

April 12, 1784.

SIR,

I have sent you inclosed a very curious proposal from Mr. Hawkins, the son of Sir John Hawkins, who, I believe, will take

of health he is better acquainted than any body, and sad indeed was all that he said. . . . I am sorry not to be more explicit. I can only now tell you that I love Mrs. Thrale with a never-to-
cease affection, and pity her more than ever I pitied any human being ; and, if I did not blame her, I could, I should, I believe, almost die for her.' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 284. Mrs. Piozzi, writing of this time, says :—' Insults at home, and spiteful expressions in every letter from the guardians broke my spirits quite

down ; and letters from my grieving lover, when they *did* come, helped to render my life miserable.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 276. Those who were 'at home' were her daughters, and among her guardians was Johnson, in whose letters not a single 'spiteful expression' has been seen.

¹ First published in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, ix. 35.

The work which John Sidney Hawkins proposed to edit was George Ruggle's *Ignoramus*. 'He has been fortunate enough,' writes

care that whatever his son promises shall be performed. If you are inclined to publish this compilation, the editor will agree for an edition on the following terms, which I think liberal enough. That you shall print the book at your own charge. That the sale shall be wholly for your benefit till your expenses are repaid; except that at the time of publication you shall put into the hands of the editor, without price, . . . copies for his friends. That, when you have been repaid, the profits arising from the sale of the remaining copies shall be divided equally between you and the editor. That the edition shall not comprise fewer than five hundred.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

951.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR.

London, April 12, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 270.

952.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London], April 13, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 268.

953.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, April 15, 1784.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of giving another dinner to the remainder of the old club². We used to meet weekly about the year fifty, and we were as cheerful as in former times; only I could not make quite so much noise; for since the paralytick affliction, my voice is sometimes weak.

Metcalf and Crutchley, without knowing each other, are both

Dr. Lort, 'to be in possession of the Italian play of Baptista Porta, whence Ruggle is said to have borrowed his design, and which was Ruggle's own copy. Farmer hunted this out among some literary lumber thrown aside in Clare Hall Library.' Nichols's *Lit.*

Hist., vii. 473. His edition was published in 1787.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 361.

² *Ante*, ii. 364. 'We were,' says Hawkins, 'very cheerfully entertained by him.' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 563.

members

members of parliament for Horsham in Sussex. Mr. Cator is chosen for Ipswich¹.

But a sick man's thoughts soon turn back upon himself. I am still very weak, though my appetite is keen, and my digestion potent; and I gratify myself more at table than ever I did at my own cost before. I have now an inclination to luxury which even your table did not excite; for till now my talk was more about the dishes than my thoughts. I remember you commended me for seeming pleased with my dinners when you had reduced your table; I am able to tell you with great veracity, that I never knew when the reduction began, nor should have known that it was made, had not you told me. I now think and consult to-day what I shall eat to-morrow. This disease likewise will I hope be cured². For there are other things, how different! which ought to predominate in the mind of such a man as I: but in this world the body will have its part; and my hope is, that it shall have no more. My hope but not my confidence; I have only the timidity of a Christian to determine, not the wisdom of a Stoick to secure me.

I hope all my dears are well. They should not be too nice in requiring letters. If my sweet Queeney writes more letters like her last, when franks come in again I will correct them and return them³.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ For Metcalfe see *ante*, ii. 345, and for Crutchley, ii. 128, *n.* 4. Cator was declared 'not duly elected.' *Parl. Hist.*, xxiv. 789.

² Boswell dined with Johnson a few weeks later at General Paoli's. 'There was a variety of dishes much to his taste, of all which he seemed to me to eat so much, that I was afraid he might be hurt by it; and I whispered to the General my fear, and begged he might not press him. "Alas! (said the General), see how very ill he looks; he can live but a very short time. Would you refuse

any slight gratifications to a man under sentence of death? There is a humane custom in Italy, by which persons in that melancholy situation are indulged with having whatever they like best to eat and drink, even with expensive delicacies.'" *Life*, iv. 330. Beattie, who dined with him about the same time, said:—"I verily believe that on Sunday last he ate as much to dinner as I have done in all for these ten days past." *Life of Beattie*, ed. 1824, p. 316.

³ There were no franks for there was no Parliament. The old one had

954.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, April 19, 1784.

I received in the morning your magnificent fish, and in the afternoon your apology for not sending it. I have invited the Hooles and Miss Burney to dine upon it to-morrow.

The club which has been lately instituted is at Sam's²; and there was I when I was last out of the house. But the people whom I mentioned in my letter are the remnant of a little club that used to meet in Ivy Lane about three-and-thirty years ago, out of which we have lost Hawkesworth and Dyer, the rest are yet on this side the grave³. Our meetings now are serious, and I think on all parts tender.

Miss Moore has written a poem called *Le Bas Bleu*; which is in my opinion a very great performance⁴. It wanders about in manuscript, and surely will soon find its way to Bath.

I shall be glad of another letter from my dear Queeney; the former was not much to be censured. The reckoning between me and Miss Sophy is out of my head. She must write to tell me how it stands.

been dissolved on March 25; the new one met on May 18. *Parl. Hist.*, xxiv. 775. Queeney probably had written in Latin as he had suggested, *ante*, ii. 384.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 363.

² The Club met at the Essex Head, 'kept by Samuel Greaves, an old servant of Mr. Thrale's.' *Life*, iv. 253, and *ante*, ii. 367. 'Your friend Sam,' Susan Burney called him, writing to Miss Burney. *Early Diary of Frances Burney*, ii. 267.

³ *Ante*, ii. 364, n. 5.

⁴ Hannah More, writing in this month, said:—'I cannot spare time to write another word, as I am very busy copying the *Bas Bleu* for the king who desires to have it. Did I tell you I went to see Dr. Johnson? He said there was no name in poetry

that might not be glad to own it. You cannot imagine how I stared; all this from Johnson, that parsimonious praiser. I told him I was delighted at his approbation; he answered quite characteristically:—'And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment in these things very low, I can tell you.'" H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 319. Horace Walpole wrote to thank her for 'her charming and very genteel poem.' *Letters*, viii. 475. See also *Life*, iv. 108. The poem is so little known that I will quote a few lines as specimens:—

'Or how Aspasia's parties shone
The first *Bas-bleu* at Athens known.
l. 7.

'Hail, conversation, heav'nly fair,
Thou bliss of life, and balm of care!

I am

I am sensible of the ease that your repayment of Mr. * * * * * has given¹; you felt yourself *gênée* by that debt; is there an English word for it?

As you do not now use your books, be pleased to let Mr. Cator know that I may borrow what I want. I think at present to take only Calmet², and the Greek Anthology. When I lay sleepless, I used to drive the night along by turning Greek epigrams into Latin.

I know not if I have not turned a hundred³.

It is time to return you thanks for your present. Since I was sick, I know not if I have not had more delicacies sent me than I had ever seen till I saw your table.

It was always Dr. Heberden's enquiry, whether my appetite for food continued. It indeed never failed me; for he considered the cessation of appetite as the despair of nature yielding up her power to the force of the disease.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Call forth the long-forgotten knowledge

Of school, of travel, and of college.

For thee, best solace of his toil,

The sage consumes his midnight oil;

And keeps late vigils to produce

Materials for thy future use.¹

l. 232.

* * * *

Then speaking of the traveller she continues:—

‘For this he bids his home farewell,

The joy of seeing is to tell.

Trust me, he never would have stirred

Were he forbid to speak a word;

And Curiosity would sleep,

If her own secrets she must keep.’

l. 256.

¹ ‘My uncle's widow, Lady Salusbury,’ writes Mrs. Piozzi, ‘had threatened to seize upon my Welsh estate if I did not repay her money, lent by Sir Thomas Salusbury to my

father. . . . This debt not having been cancelled stood against me as heiress. I had been forced to borrow from the ladies; and Mr. Crutchley, when I signed my mortgage to them for £7,000, said:—“Now, Madam, call your daughters in and thank them; make them your best *curtsey* (with a sneer) for keeping you out of a gaol.” He added £500 or £800 more, and I paid that off as alluded to; but Dr. Johnson knew how I was distressed, and you see how even he had been writing!!’ Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 276.

² Probably Augustin Calmet's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

³ ‘During his sleepless nights he amused himself by translating into Latin verse, from the Greek, many of the epigrams in the *Anthologia*. These translations, with some other poems by him in Latin, he gave to his friend Mr. Langton, who, having

To

955.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

London, April 21, 1784.

DEAR MADAM,

I make haste to send you intelligence, which, if I do not still flatter myself, you will not receive without some degree of pleasure. After a confinement of one hundred twenty-nine days, more than the third part of a year, and no inconsiderable part of human life, I this day returned thanks to God in St. Clement's church, for my recovery; a recovery, in my seventy-fifth year, from a distemper which few in the vigour of youth are known to surmount; a recovery, of which neither myself, my friends, nor my physicians, had any hope; for though they flattered me with some continuance of life, they never supposed that I could cease to be dropsical. The dropsy however is quite vanished, and the asthma so much mitigated, that I walked to-day with a more easy respiration than I have known, I think, for perhaps two years past. I hope the mercy that lengthens my days, will assist me to use them well.

The Hooles, Miss Burney, and Mrs. Hall (Wesley's sister), feasted yesterday with me very cheerfully on your noble salmon². Mr. Allen could not come, and I sent him a piece, and a great tail is still left.

Dr. Brocklesby forbids the club at present, not caring to venture the chillness of the evening; but I purpose to shew myself on Saturday at the Academy's feast. I cannot publish my return to the world more effectually; for, as the Frenchman says, *tout le monde s'y trouvera*.

For this occasion I ordered some cloaths; and was told by the taylor, that when he brought me a sick dress, he never

added a few notes, sold them to the booksellers for a small sum, to be given to some of Johnson's relations, which was accordingly done; and they are printed in the collection of his works.' *Life*, iv. 384, and *Works*, i. 175.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 365.

² 'The day,' writes Miss Burney, 'was tolerable; but Dr. Johnson is never his best when there is nobody to draw him out; but he was much pleased with my coming, and very kind indeed.' *Mme. D'Arblay's Diary*, ii. 310.

expected

expected to make me any thing of any other kind. My recovery is indeed wonderful.

I am, dear Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

956.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

MADAM,

London, April 26, 1784.

On Saturday I shewed myself again to the living world at the Exhibition; much and splendid was the company: but like the Doge of Genoa at Paris², I admired nothing but myself. I went up all the stairs to the pictures without stopping to rest or to breathe,

‘In all the madness of superfluous health³.’

The Prince of Wales had promised to be there; but when we had waited an hour and half, sent us word that he could not come⁴.

My cough still torments me; but it is only a cough, and much less oppressive than some of former times, but it disturbs my nights.

Mrs. Davenant called to pay me a guinea, but I gave two for you. Whatever reasons you have for frugality, it is not worth while to save a guinea a-year by withdrawing it from a public charity.

I know not whether I told you that my old friend Mrs. Cotterel, now no longer Miss, has called to see me. Mrs. Lewis is not well⁵.

Mrs. Davenant says, that you regain your health. That you regain your health is more than a common recovery; because I

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 367.

² At Versailles. *Ante*, i. 270, n. 2.

³ POPE. *Essay on Man*, iii. 3.

⁴ He who was slowly to ripen into the First Gentleman in Europe was but twenty-one when he treated men like Johnson and Reynolds with this insolence. Reynolds exhibited sixteen pictures, among them the

portraits of Fox, and Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse. Leslie and Taylor's *Reynolds*, ii. 436.

⁵ Miss Cotterel, like Miss Carter, Miss Porter, Miss Aston, and Miss Reynolds, having reached a certain age had taken the title of Mrs. Mrs. Lewis was her sister. *Ante*, ii. 383, n. 3.

infer,

infer, that you regain your peace of mind. Settle your thoughts and controul your imagination, and think no more of Hesperian felicity. Gather yourself and your children into a little system, in which each may promote the ease, the safety, and the pleasure of the rest ¹.

Mr. Howard called on me a few days ago, and gave [me] the new edition, much enlarged, of his Account of Prisons ². He has been to survey the prisons on the continent; and in Spain he tried to penetrate the dungeons of the Inquisition, but his curiosity was very imperfectly gratified. At Madrid they shut him quite out; at Villadolid they shewed him some publick rooms.

While I am writing, the post has brought your kind letter. Do not think with dejection of your own condition; a little patience will probably give you health, it will certainly give you riches, and all the accommodations that riches can procure ³.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

¹ Mrs. Piozzi has on this the following marginal note:—‘Mrs. Davenant neither knew nor cared, as she wanted her brother, Harry Cotton, to marry Lady Keith [Queeney, married in 1808 to Admiral Lord Keith], and I offered my estate with her. Miss Thrale said she wished to have nothing to do either with my family or my fortune. They were all cruel and all insulting.’ Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 321. Mme. D’Arblay, to whom the secret of Mrs. Thrale’s attachment had been confided, says that ‘Miss Thrale’s conduct, through scenes of dreadful difficulty, notwithstanding her extreme youth, was even exemplary.’ *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, ii. 246.

² In the Sale Catalogue of Johnson’s Library, Lot 286 is Howard’s *State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, 1784. The first edition was published in 1777.

Erasmus Darwin, addressing Benevolence, tells how—

‘From realm to realm, with cross or crescent crown’d,
Where’er Mankind and Misery are found,
O’er burning sands, deep waves, or wilds of snow,
Thy Howard journeying seeks the house of woe.’

The Botanic Garden, vol. ii, canto 2, l. 439. Horace Walpole speaks of Howard as ‘the apostle of humanity.’ *Letters*, ix. 177.

³ For accommodation see *ante*, ii. 367, n. 5. Boswell records that when they were looking at Lord Scarsdale’s seat at Keddlestone he remarked:—“One should think that the proprietor of all this *must* be happy.” “Nay, Sir,” said Johnson; “all this excludes but one evil—poverty.” *Life*, iii. 160. In *The Rambler*, No. 53, Johnson says that

957.

TO MRS. PORTER ¹.

MY DEAR,

London, April 26, 1784.

I write to you now, to tell you that I am so far recovered that on the 21st I went to church to return thanks, after a confinement of more than four long months.

My recovery is such as neither myself nor the physicians at all expected, and is such as that very few examples have been known of the like. Join with me, my dear love, in returning thanks to God.

Dr. Vyse ² has been with (me) this evening; he tells me that you likewise have been much disordered, but that you are now better. I hope that we shall some time have a cheerful interview. In the mean time let us pray for one another.

I am, Madam,

Your humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

958.

TO MISS REYNOLDS ³.

DEAR MADAM,

Bolt-court, 30th April, 1784.

Mr. Allen ⁴ has looked over the papers, and thinks that one hundred copies will come to five pounds.

Fifty will cost 4*l.* 10*s.*, and five and twenty will cost 4*l.* 5*s.* It seems therefore scarcely worth while to print fewer than a hundred.

Suppose you printed two hundred and fifty at 6*l.* 10*s.*, and, without my name ⁵, tried the sale, which may be secretly done. You would then see the opinion of the public without hazard, if

'wealth is chiefly to be valued as it secures us from poverty; for it is more useful for defence than acquisition, and is not so much able to procure good as to exclude evil.'

¹ First published in Malone's *Boswell*.

² *Ante*, ii. 14.

³ First published in Croker's *Bos-*

well, page 753.

For Miss Reynolds's writings see *ante*, ii. 180, 223, 249.

⁴ Mr. Allen, Johnson's landlord, was a printer.

⁵ I conjecture that Johnson wrote 'without *any* name.' His Letter of May 28, *post*, p. 398, shows that she laid aside the thought of printing.

nobody

nobody knows but I. If any body else is in the secret, you shall not have my consent to venture.

I am, dear Madam,

Your most affectionate

and most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

959.

TO MISS JANE LANGTON.

[London], May 10, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 271.

960.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

Now I am broken loose, my friends seem willing enough to see me. On Monday I dined with Paradise; Tuesday, Hoole; Wednesday, Dr. Taylor; to-day, with Jodrel; Friday, Mrs. Garrick; Saturday, Dr. Brocklesby; next Monday, Dilly².

But I do not now drive the world about; the world drives or

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 369.

Johnson does not seem to have known that Mrs. Thrale had spent some days in London early in this month. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 314.

² Boswell dined with Johnson at Paradise's and at Joddrel's, but was too indolent to record the talk. At Joddrel's was Lord Monboddo, 'who avoided any communication with Dr. Johnson.' *Life*, iv. 272. At Mrs. Garrick's Johnson met Fanny Burney and Hannah More (*ib.* p. 275); but neither of them gives any account of the evening, though Miss Burney just mentions it. Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 315. Of the dinner at Dr. Brocklesby's Boswell gives some record. *Life*, iv. 273. Windham also was there, who records in his *Diary*, p. 9:—'After dinner took Johnson an airing over Blackfriars Bridge, thence to the Club.' The Club was the Essex-Head Club, where, says Windham, 'there were

present Boswell, Murphy, Brocklesby, Berry, Mr. Bowles, Hoole and his son, and a son of Dr. Burney, he that was expelled from Cambridge.' This must have been Charles Burney the Greek scholar, who left Cambridge without taking his degree, though the degree of M.A. was conferred on him about thirty years later. Porson told how he had once called on Burney to borrow a book, and not finding him at home carried it off. Burney soon returning, 'pursued him in a chaise, and recovered it. Porson talked of this affair with some bitterness. "Did Burney suppose," he said, "that I meant to play *his* old tricks?" (alluding to a well-known circumstance in the earlier part of Burney's history).' *Table Talk of Rogers*, p. 315.

Of the talk which Johnson had that evening at the Essex-Head Club Boswell gives some account (*Life*, iv. 275), and also of the dinner at Dilly's on Monday. *ib.* p. 278.

draws

draws me¹. I am very weak; the old distress of sleeplessness comes again upon me. I have however one very strong basis of health, an eager appetite and strong digestion.

Queeney's letter I expected before now: Susy is likewise in debt. I believe I am in debt to Sophy, but the dear Loves ought not to be too rigorous.

Dr. Taylor has taken St. Margaret's, in Westminster, vacant by Dr. Wilson's death²: how long he will keep it I cannot guess: it is of no great value, and its income consists much of voluntary contributions.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

London, Thursday, May 13, 1784.

You never date fully.

961.

MADAM,

TO MISS REYNOLDS³.

May 28, 1784.

You do me wrong by imputing my omission to any captious punctiliousness. I have not yet seen Sir Joshua, and, when

¹ Johnson perhaps had in mind a line in Dryden's *Character of a Good Parson*:—'And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw.' In speaking of Warburton he said:—'When I read Warburton first and observed his force, and his contempt of mankind, I thought he had driven the world before him.' *Life*, v. 93.

² *Ante*, ii. 158. Dr. Wilson was also Rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook. In this church 'he erected a statue to the celebrated female historian [Mrs. Macaulay] while living, which was boarded up till her death by authority of the Spiritual Court.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784, i. 317. In a small party at the Bishop's Palace in Lichfield Dr. Johnson was asked for 'his opinion

with respect to the propriety of Dr. Wilson's conduct in putting up this statue. He did not at first hear the question; on its being repeated by Miss Seward he replied:—"Aye, aye; poor foolish Wilson! why, Madam, he was a fool for doing it, and she was a fool for per[mitting it to be done]*." British Museum, *Add. MSS.* 24419. Horace Walpole speaks of Wilson as 'Mrs. Macaulay's idolater—that dirty disappointed hunter of a mitre, Dr. Wilson.' *Letters*, vii. 42.

³ First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 757.

For Johnson as a negotiator with Sir Joshua Reynolds on behalf of Miss Reynolds see *ante*, ii. 84, n. 2.

* The MS. is imperfect.

I do see him, I know not how to serve you. When I spoke upon your affairs to him, at Christmas, I received no encouragement to speak again.

But we shall never do business by letters. We must see one another.

I have returned your papers, and am glad that you laid aside the thought of printing them¹.

I am, Madam,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

962.

TO OZIAS HUMPHRY.

[London], May 31, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 269.

963.

TO MRS. THRALE².

DEAR MADAM,

London, May 31, 1784.

Why you expected me to be better than I am I cannot imagine: I am better than any that saw me in my illness ever expected to have seen me again. I am however at a great distance from health, very weak and very asthmatick, and troubled with my old nocturnal distresses; so that I am little asleep in the night, and in the day too little awake.

I have one way or other been disappointed hitherto of that change of air, from which I think some relief may possibly be obtained; but Boswel and I have settled our resolution to go to Oxford on Thursday³. But since I was at Oxford, my convivial friend Dr. Edwards and my learned friend Dr. Wheeler are both dead⁴, and my probabilities of pleasure are very much diminished. Why, when so many are taken away, have I been yet spared! I hope that I may be fitter to die.

How long we shall stay at Oxford, or what we shall do when we leave it, neither Boszzy nor I have yet settled; he is for his

¹ *Ante*, ii. 395.

Life, iv. 283—311.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 370.

⁴ For Edwards and Wheeler see

³ For the Journey to Oxford see *ante*, ii. 257, 260, 327.

part resolved to remove his family to London and try his fortune at the English bar¹: let us all wish him success.

Think of me, if you can, with tenderness.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

964.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], June [? 1], 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 283.

965.

TO THE REVEREND DR. HAMILTON².

SIR,

[London], June 2, 1784.

You do every thing that is liberal and kind. Mrs. Pellé is a bad manager for herself, but I will employ a more skilful agent, one Mrs. Gardiner³, who will wait on you and employ Pellé's money to the best advantage. Mrs. Gardiner will wait on you.

I return you, Sir, sincere thanks for your attention to me. I am ill, but hope to come back better, and to be made better still by your conversation.

I am, Sir, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON⁴.

966.

TO MRS. THRALE⁵.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 17, 1784.

I returned last night from Oxford after a fortnight's abode

¹ Boswell records a conversation which passed between him and Johnson at Oxford on this subject. *Life*, iv. 309. See also *ante*, i. 316. To Bishop Percy he wrote from Carlisle on July 8:—"I have at length resolved, with Dr. Johnson's approbation, to try my fortune at the English bar, a scheme of which your Lordship talked to me in an animating strain when I was hospitably entertained by you at this place." Nichols's *Lit. Hist.*, vii. 303.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 758.

For Dr. Hamilton see *ante*, ii. 296, 378.

³ *Ante*, i. 156, n. 3.

⁴ In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of May 10, 1875, Lot 116 is:—"Brief Autographic Memoranda in Latin and English of Dr. Johnson's feelings, &c., on the 8th, 9th, 10th June, 1784. "Very breathless and dejected," on the first date."

⁵ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 372.

with

with Dr. Adams, who treated me as well as I could expect or wish ; and he that contents a sick man, a man whom it is impossible to please, has surely done his part well¹ : I went in the common vehicle with very little fatigue, and came back I think with less². My stomach continues good, and according to your advice I spare neither asparagus nor peas³ and hope to do good execution upon all the summer fruits⁴. But my nights are bad, very bad ;

¹ Boswell quotes this passage, *Life*, iv. 311. Mr. John Coke Fowler, Resident Magistrate at Swansea, who matriculated at Pembroke College in 1837, tells the following anecdote :— ‘The old porter who lived for more than fifty years after Dr. Johnson’s last visit to Oxford told me that the Doctor desired to mount the narrow stairs which led to his old rooms. He was then very unwell and infirm. Consequently the porter went behind him up the stairs, and in a manner hardly consistent with dignity applied his strength to that ponderous part of Dr. Johnson’s frame which might otherwise have brought him backwards.’ *Recollections of Public Men*. Published in *The Red Dragon*, p. 239.

² It was on the way down that Johnson scolded the waiter for the roast mutton which was set before the passengers at dinner. *Ante*, ii. 257, n. 3. His conversation in the coach charmed his fellow-travellers, ‘two very agreeable ladies from America. “How he does talk !” one of them said to me aside (writes Boswell) ; “Every sentence is an essay.”’ *Life*, iv. 284.

³ Johnson dined one day at the house of W. J. Mickle, the translator of the *Lusiad*, who lived at Wheatley, ‘a very pretty country place, a few miles from Oxford.’ *Life*, iv. 308. I am informed that ‘it is handed down as a tradition among Mickle’s descendants that at this dinner Johnson said that his host was the

first Scotchman at whose house he had had enough of green pease.’ In the *Sporting Magazine* for October, 1806, p. 10, the following anecdote is told of this same dinner :— ‘A gentleman of the company said that whatever genuine patriotism remained in the country was to be found only amongst the Whigs. Johnson asked him if he knew who was the first Whig. The gentleman replied in the negative. “Well then, Sir,” said the Doctor, “I’ll tell you who he was ; his name was Lucifer, and for his patriotism he was kicked out of heaven.”’ Johnson is described as being ‘rather a man of taciturnity,’ and as ‘putting on his spectacles.’ The spectacles throw doubt on the whole story ; perhaps it is nothing but a modification of Johnson’s saying ‘that the first Whig was the Devil.’ *Life*, iii. 326.

⁴ Johnson wrote on July 20 :— ‘My appetite still continues keen enough ; and what I consider as a symptom of radical health, I have a voracious delight in raw summer fruit, of which I was less eager a few years ago.’ *Ib.* iv. 353. Sir William Temple, with whose writings he was familiar, says :— ‘No part of diet in any season is so healthful, so natural, and so agreeable to the stomach as good and well-ripened fruits. I can say it for myself at least and all my friends that the season of summer fruits is ever the season of health with us.’ Temple’s *Works*, ed. 1757, iii. 236.

the

the asthma attacks me often, and the dropsy is watching an opportunity to return. I hope I have checked it, but great caution must be used, and indeed great caution is not a high price for health or ease.

What I shall do next I know not; all my schemes of rural pleasure have been some way or other disappointed. I have now some thought of Lichfield and Ashbourne. Let me know, dear Madam, your destination ¹.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

967.

SIR,

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ².

When we parted last night, I thought worse of your case, than I think since I have thought longer upon it. Your general distemper is, I think, a hectic fever, for which the bark is proper, and which quietness of mind, and gentle exercise, and fresh air may cure. Your present weakness is the effect of such waste of blood as would weaken a young man in his highest vigour. It might be necessary, but it must sink both your courage and strength.

Dr. Nichols ³ hurt himself extremely in his old age by lavish

¹ It was probably on the very day Johnson wrote this letter that Piozzi in Milan received the letter from Mrs. Thrale's doctor at Bath which brought him back post haste to England. Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 277.

² I owe the copy of this Letter to the kindness of Mr. F. Locker-Lampson, of Rowfant, Crawley, in whose possession is the original.

³ Frank Nicholls. Johnson speaking of the Earl of Bute's 'undue partiality for Scotchmen' said:— 'He turned out Dr. Nichols, a very eminent man, from being physician to the King, to make room for one

of his countrymen, a man very low in his profession.' *Life*, ii. 354. See also *ib.* iii. 163. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, i. 13, is a Memoir of Nicholls where it is stated that on the death of George II, 'this most skilful physician was superseded to make way for one (Sir W. D.) who, not long before, had been an army surgeon of the lowest class. By this exchange the upstart rose to dignity and riches.' Nicholls a few years earlier had satirised the Scots in an anonymous pamphlet. To 'lavish phlebotomy' he had no doubt resorted as a remedy against 'an in-

phlebotomy. Do not bleed again very soon, and when you can delay no longer be more moderate.

I think you do right in going home, and hope you will have an easy and pleasant journey.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Bolt Court, June 19, 1784.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor.

968.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR¹.

DEAR SIR,

It is now Wednesday Evening². I hope you are lodged easily and safely in Ashbourne. Since we parted I have not been well. I dined on Saturday with Dr. Brocklesby, and was taken ill at his house, but went to the club³. On Monday I was so uneasy that I staid at home. On Tuesday I dined at the club⁴, but was not well at night, nor am well to day but hope

veterate asthmatic cough' which carried him off in his eightieth year, just as Johnson, under a similar distress, had had taken from him about fifty ounces of blood (*ante*, ii. 253).

W. D. was William Duncan, who in 1764 was made a baronet. He married a sister of the Earl of Thanet. Walpole's *Letters*, vi. 130, and *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1764, p. 399.

For Taylor's phlebotomy see *ante*, ii. 160.

¹ From the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred H. Huth, of Bolney House, Ennismore Gardens, London.

² Boswell had visited Johnson in the morning of this day, after first seeing fifteen men in a batch hanged before Newgate. From the scene of this 'legal massacre' (to use John-

son's own words) Bolt Court was distant but a few minutes' walk. *Life*, iv. 328.

³ The Essex Head Club which met on a Saturday and two evenings besides. *Ib.* iv. 254, 275. *Ante*, ii. 396, *n.* 2.

⁴ The Literary Club. 'On Tuesday, June 22,' writes Boswell, 'I dined with him at the Literary Club, the last time of his being in that respectable society. He looked ill; but had such a manly fortitude, that he did not trouble the company with melancholy complaints. They all shewed evident marks of kind concern about him, with which he was much pleased, and he exerted himself to be as entertaining as his indisposition allowed him.' *Ib.* iv. 326.

the

the fit is abating. Boswel has a great mind to draw me to Lichfield, and as I love to travel with him, I have a mind to be drawn if I could hope in any short time to come to your house, for Lichfield will, I am afraid, not be a place for long continuance, and, to tell the truth, I am afraid of seeing my self so far from home, as I must return alone¹.

Sir John Hawkins has just told me that you preached on Sunday with great vigour. You have therefore a great fund of strength left, which I entreat you not to bleed away².

I am, Sir,

Yours affectionately,

SAM: JOHNSON.

June 23, 1784.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

969

TO MRS. THRALE³.

DEAR MADAM,

London, June 26, 1784.

This morning I saw Mr. Lysons⁴: he is an agreeable young man, and likely enough to do all that he designs. I received him as one sent by you has a right to be received, and I hope he will tell you that he was satisfied; but the initiatory⁵

¹ Boswell, who was returning to Scotland, no doubt wanted Johnson to accompany him as far as Lichfield. Johnson told Mrs. Knowles that 'he was the best travelling companion in the world.' *Life*, iii. 294. At the beginning of the *Journey to the Hebrides* he praises 'his gaiety of conversation and civility of manners.' *Life*, v. 52, and *ante*, i. 291. Had they gone together a most interesting addition would have been made to the *Life*. As it was, Johnson started less than a fortnight after Boswell.

² For Taylor's habit of 'periodical bleeding' see *Life*, iii. 152. Perhaps Johnson thought that he himself had bled his strength away by the fifty ounces which he had had taken from him in the spring of 1782. *Ib.* iv. 146.

³ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 373.

⁴ Samuel Lysons, afterwards Keeper of the Records in the Tower, then a law-student. 'He made,' writes Mrs. Piozzi, 'my bargain with the bookseller [for the *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*], from whom on my return I received £300, a sum unexampled in those days for so small a volume.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, ii. 126.

Lysons, 'though a great friend of Mrs. Piozzi's, said that Johnson not only revised throughout her poem of *The Three Warnings*, but supplied several new lines.' Prior's *Malone*, p. 413. Boswell did not know of this. *Life*, ii. 26.

⁵ *Initiatory* is not in Johnson's *Dictionary*.

conversation of two strangers is seldom pleasing or instructive to any great degree, and ours was such as other occasions of the same kind produce.

A message came to me yesterday to tell me that Macbean, after three days of illness, is dead of a suppression of urine. He was one of those who, as Swift says, *stood as a screen between me and death*¹. He has I hope made a good exchange. He was very pious; he was very innocent; he did no ill; and of doing good a continual tenour of distress allowed him few opportunities: he was very highly esteemed in the house².

Write to me if you can some words of comfort. My dear girls seem all to forget me.

I am, Madam,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON³.

¹ 'The fools, my juniors by a year,
Are tortured with suspense and
fear,
Who wisely thought my age a
screen,
When death approached, to
stand between.'

On the Death of Dr. Swift: SWIFT'S
Works, ed. 1803, xi. 246.

² The Charterhouse, of which he
was 'a poor brother.' *Ante*, ii.
213.

³ Instead of 'the words of comfort'
which he asked for he received in a
few days the following letters un-
signed. That they were unsigned
was clearly intentional. Mrs. Thrale
was not yet married to Piozzi, but
she wished Johnson to believe, as his
answer shows he inclined to believe,
that she was married. In publishing
the first of the letters—the second
she left unpublished—she heads it

'Mrs. Piozzi to Dr. Johnson,' as in
like manner she heads his letter of
July 8, 'Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Piozzi.'
'We were married,' she says, 'in
London by the Spanish ambassador's
chaplain, and returned hither [to
Bath] to be married by Mr. Morgan,
of Bath, at St. James's Church, July
25, 1784.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 277.
In Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, for
July 31, is the following curious
announcement: 'Bath, July 28.
Sunday (and not before) was married
at St. James's Church in this city,
Gabriele Piozzi, Esq., of that Parish
to Mrs. Thrale, Widow of Henry
Thrale, Esq., of St. Saviour's, South-
wark.' The Rev. H. R. Laughton, the
Chaplain of the Spanish Chapel, in-
forms me that he has examined the
records which go back to 1734, but
has not discovered any trace of the
marriage.

'MRS. PIOZZI TO DR. JOHNSON.

'MY DEAR SIR,

Bath, June 30.

'The enclosed is a circular letter which I have sent to all the guardians,
but our friendship demands somewhat more; it requires that I should beg

TO

970.

MADAM,

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

If I interpret your letter right, you are ignominiously your pardon for concealing from you a connexion which you must have heard of by many, but I suppose never believed^a. Indeed, my dear Sir, it was concealed only to save us both needless pain; I could not have borne to reject that counsel it would have killed me to take, and I only tell it you now because all is irrevocably settled, and out of your power to prevent. I will say, however, that the dread of your disapprobation has given me some anxious moments, and though, perhaps, I am become by many privations the most independent woman in the world, I feel as if acting without a parent's consent till you write kindly to

Your faithful servant.'

Piozzi Letters, ii. 374.

'SIR,

CIRCULAR.

'As one of the executors of Mr. Thrale's will and guardian to his daughters, I think it my duty to acquaint you that the three eldest left Bath last Friday for their own house at Brighthelmstone in company with an amiable friend, Miss Nicholson, who has sometimes resided with us here, and in whose society they may, I think, find some advantages and certainly no disgrace. I waited on them to Salisbury, Wilton, &c., and offered to attend them to the seaside myself, but they preferred this lady's company to mine, having heard that Mr. Piozzi is coming back from Italy, and judging perhaps by our past friendship and continued correspondence that his return would be succeeded by our marriage.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant.

Bath, June 30, 1784.'

Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 110.

Miss Nicholson, 'who,' Mrs. Piozzi says, 'has sometimes resided with us here,' was 'directed to her door by Providence' early in the very month in which she wrote this letter. *Ib.* ii. 334. In another passage she writes:—'Miss Thrale was of age by now, and I left Miss Nicholson, the Bishop's granddaughter, whom they appeared to like exceedingly, *with them*, but she soon quitted her post on observing that they gave people to understand she was a cast mistress of dear Piozzi, who never saw her face out of their company, except once at a dinner visit.' *Ib.* i. 275. Miss Thrale was not of age. She was born on

September 17, 1764, and so was only nineteen. Baretti has the following note on Mrs. Thrale's first letter:—'She was not yet married when she wrote her last letter but one to Johnson. This letter of hers is falsified for the purpose of this edition, and the answer to it [Letter 972] is a mere forgery of hers. But this I shall prove in another place.' Johnson's letter was not forged, as Mr. Hayward saw the original. It was not, however, as it is made to appear by Mrs. Piozzi, an answer to her first letter.

¹ First published in Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 111.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for

^a This line is quoted by Boswell, *Life*, iv. 339.

married;

married; if it is yet undone, let us *once*¹ more *talk* together. If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness; if you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief. If the last act is yet to do, I who have loved you, esteemed you, revered you, and *served you*, I who long thought you the first of woman-kind, entreat that, before your fate is irrevocable, I may once more see you. I was, I once was,

Madam, most truly yours,

July 2, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

I will come down if you will permit it².

December, 1784, ii. 893, a spurious copy of this letter is given—‘an adumbration’ of it as Johnson, according to Hawkins, called it. Hawkins’s *Johnson*, p. 569. It is re-

printed in Croker’s *Boswell*, p. 777.

¹ ‘The four words which I have printed in italics are indistinctly written, and cannot be satisfactorily made out.’ Note by Mr. Hayward.

² To this letter Mrs. Thrale sent the following answer:—

‘SIR,

‘July 4, 1784.

‘I have this morning received from you so rough a letter in reply to one which was both tenderly and respectfully written, that I am forced to desire the conclusion of a correspondence which I can bear to continue no longer. The birth of my second husband is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not meaner; his profession is not meaner, and his superiority in what he professes acknowledged by all mankind. It is want of fortune then that is ignominious; the character of the man I have chosen has no other claim to such an epithet. The religion to which he has been always a zealous adherent will, I hope, teach him to forgive insults he has not deserved; mine will, I hope, enable me to bear them at once with dignity and patience. To hear that I have forfeited my fame is indeed the greatest insult I ever yet received. My fame is as unsullied as snow, or I should think it unworthy of him who must henceforth protect it.

I write by the coach the more speedily and effectually to prevent your coming hither. Perhaps by my fame (and I hope it is so) you mean only that celebrity which is a consideration of a much lower kind. I care for that only as it may give pleasure to my husband and his friends.

Farewell, dear Sir, and accept my best wishes. You have always commanded my esteem, and long enjoyed the fruits of a friendship never infringed by one harsh expression on my part during twenty years of familiar talk. Never did I oppose your will, or control your wish; nor can your unmerited severity itself lessen my regard; but till you have changed your opinion of Mr. Piozzi let us converse no more. God bless you.’

Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 111.

In this letter by the use of the word *husband* she evidently wishes to lead

Johnson to believe that she is already married.

To

971.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[London], July 6, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 348.

972.

TO MRS. THRALE¹.

DEAR MADAM,

London, July 8, 1784.

What you have done, however I may lament it, I have no pretence to resent, as it has not been injurious to me: I therefore breathe out one sigh more of tenderness, perhaps useless, but at least sincere².

I wish that God may grant you every blessing, that you may be happy in this world for its short continuance, and eternally happy in a better state; and whatever I can contribute to your happiness I am very ready to repay, for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched.

Do not think slightly of the advice which I now presume to offer. Prevail upon Mr. Piozzi to settle in England³: you may

Johnson, speaking of her to Miss Burney in the following November, said:—‘If I meet with one of her letters I burn it instantly. I have burnt all I can find.’ Mme. D’Arblay’s *Diary*, ii. 328. The one just quoted escaped the fire, and being found among his papers was returned by Hawkins, one of his executors, to the writer. *Memoirs of Miss Hawkins*, i. 66. The other two executors, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir William Scott, seven years later, talking in Malone’s presence, ‘concerning that despicable woman, Mrs. Piozzi,’ told him of these two letters ‘which she had suppressed. She said in hers, as both Sir W. Scott and Sir Joshua agreed, that however she might have disgraced *Miss Salusbury* by marrying the brewer she could not disgrace *Mrs. Thrale* by marrying Piozzi.’ Prior’s *Malone*,

p. 412. Johnson praised Reynolds for the truthfulness of his stories (Piozzi’s *Anecdotes*, p. 116); in Scott who became a great Judge we should have looked for accuracy. Yet how wide was their report from the truth!

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 375.

According to the heading there given this letter was addressed ‘To Mrs. Piozzi.’ Mr. Hayward however says that both this letter and that of the 2nd were addressed, ‘To Mrs. Thrale.’ Hayward’s *Piozzi*, i. 109. Nevertheless with strange carelessness in printing it he heads it ‘To Mrs. Piozzi.’

² ‘How could Johnson have ever written such stuff?’—BARETTI.

³ On this Mrs. Piozzi has the following note:—‘Dr. Johnson’s advice corresponded exactly with Mr. Piozzi’s intentions. He was impatient to show Italy to me and *me*

live

live here with more dignity than in Italy, and with more security : your rank will be higher, and your fortune more under your own eye. I desire not to detail all my reasons, but every argument of prudence and interest is for England, and only some phantoms of imagination ' seduce you to Italy.

I am afraid however that my counsel is vain, yet I have eased my heart by giving it.

When Queen Mary took the resolution of sheltering herself in England, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, attempting to dissuade her, attended on her journey; and when they came to the irremeable² stream that separated the two kingdoms, walked by her side into the water, in the middle of which he seized her bridle, and with earnestness proportioned to her danger and his own affection pressed her to return. The Queen went forward³.

to the Italians, but never meant to forbear bringing his wife home again, and showing he had brought her. Well aware of the bustle his marriage made, it was his most earnest wish that every doubt of his honour and of my happiness should be dispelled; so that whilst our ladies [her daughters] and Madame D'Arblay, that was Miss Burney, and Baretti, and all the low Italians of the Hay-market who hated my husband, were hatching stories how he had sold my jointure, had shut me up in a convent, &c., we made our journey to our residence in Italy as showy as we possibly could. All the English at every town partook of our hospitality; the inhabitants came flocking, nothing loth, and we sent presents to our beautiful daughters by every hand that would carry them.' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 275.

¹ In the opening lines of *Rasselas* Johnson addresses those 'who pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope.'

² 'Occupat Æneas aditum custode sepulto,

Evaditque celer ripam irremeabilis undæ.'

'The keeper charm'd, the chief without delay
Pass'd on and took the irremeable way.'

DRYDEN. *Æneid*, vi. 424.

See *ante*, i. 130.

³ Mary did not cross the Solway on horseback, but the arm of the sea in a fishing-boat, from Dundrennan in Galloway to Workington. Johnson's story, which I did not find in Robertson, Hume, Keith or Anderson, I traced to Adam Blackwood, who gives the following account:—

'Messire Jean Hamilton, Ascheuesque de saint André, et primat de l'Eglise d'Escoce, hôte fort aagé, et de longue experience, ne peust jamais trouver ceste opinion bonne, cognoissant de tout temps l'infidelité du conseil d'Angleterre. * * * Mais tout cela ne peut oster de la teste de ceste Princesse l'assurance qu'elle avoit pris aux promesses de sa cousine. Quoy voyant ce venerable Prelat, et qu'elle se precipitoit en un peril tout euidant, ainsi qu'elle se mettoit sur l'eau pour descendre en cette terre fatale, il se mit à genoux, la saisit au corps avec les deux bras, et avec

If

—If the parallel reaches thus far, may it go no further.—The tears stand in my eyes.

I am going into Derbyshire, and hope to be followed by your good wishes, for I am, with great affection,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Any letters that come for me hither will be sent me¹.

973.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[London], July 11, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 351, where it is misdated June 11.

974.

DEAR SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. ADAMS².

I am going into Staffordshire and Derbyshire in quest of some relief³, of which my need is not less than when I was treated at your house with so much tenderness.

I have now received the collations for Xenophon, which I have sent you with the letters that relate to them. I cannot at present take any part in the work, but I would rather pay for a

larmes luy dist, qu' elle auroit la peine de le trainer, si elle passoit plus outre. Mais en fin la voyant obstinee en son malheur, et ne pouant resister à sa volonté, apres luy avoir encores une fois remontré que sa Majesté s'alloit perdre, son estat, son Royaume, ses bons seruiteurs, et la foy Catholique, il lui demanda congé de se retirer,' &c. Adami Blacvodæi [Adam Blackwood] *Opera Omnia*, 1644, p. 589. Blackwood, or his French printer, makes a strange hash of the names of places. We find Dundreuen, Vvirkinton, Cokirmouth and Courberlande. The 'venerable prelate,' who was a man of the loosest life and a cruel persecutor, was hanged three years later. Froude's *Hist. of England*, ed. 1870, vi. 221, 3; ix. 419.

¹ 'In a memorandum on this letter Mrs. Piozzi says:—"I wrote him a very kind and affectionate letter."' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 114.

² First published in Croker's *Boswell*, page 782. Corrected by me from the original in the possession of Messrs. J. Pearson & Co., 5 Pall Mall Place, S.W.

The Letter bears no address and is misdated June 11. It was evidently written in July. On June 11 Johnson was with Boswell at Dr. Adams's house. It is curious that a Letter written to Boswell was also misdated June 11. *Life*, iv. 351.

The original was sold by Messrs. Christie & Co. on June 5, 1888 (Lot 49), for £5 5s.

³ He set out on July 13. *Life*, iv. 353. collation

collation of Oppian, than see it neglected; for the Frenchmen act with great liberality. Let us not fall below them¹.

I know not in what state Dr. Edwards left his book². Some of his emendations seemed to me to (be) irrefragably certain, and such therefore as ought not to be lost. His rule was not (to) change the text, and, therefore, I suppose he has left notes to be subjoined. As the book is posthumous some account of the Editor ought to be given.

You have now the whole process of the correspondence before you. When the Prior is answered, let some apology be made for me³.

I was forced to devide [*sic*] the collation, but as it is paged, you will easily put every part in its proper place.

Be pleased to convey my respects to Mrs. and Miss Adams⁴.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

London, June [July 11], 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

975.

TO THE REVEREND MR. BAGSHAW.

[London], July 12, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 351.

¹ The collation was probably wanted for an edition of Oppian by Belin de Ballu of which one volume was published at Strasbourg in 1786. The editor was 'conseiller à la cour des monnaies' at Paris. He does not seem to have received the collation from Oxford^a.

² For Dr. Edwards see *ante*, ii. 257. Johnson wrote to him on November 2, 1778:—'What comes of Xenophon? If you do not like the trouble of publishing the book, do not let your commentaries be lost.' *Life*, iii. 367. He lived long enough to complete the Greek text and the Latin version of the *Memorabilia*, the work on which he was engaged. The notes and the various readings were supplied by his friend, Henry Owen,

who had the use of his manuscripts. 'The Frenchmen' had collated the three manuscripts in the King's Library at Paris. The book was published in 1785.

³ The Prior was, no doubt, the Prior of the English Benedictines in whose convent Johnson had a cell appropriated to him. *Life*, ii. 402. See *ante*, i. 402, for Johnson's Letter to Dr. Adams in which he introduces 'a learned Benedictine.'

⁴ 'Miss Adams happened to tell him that a little coffee-pot, in which she had made his coffee, was the only thing she could call her own. He turned to her with a complacent gallantry, "Don't say so, my dear; I hope you don't reckon my heart as nothing."'
Life, iv. 292.

^a I am indebted for this information to Mr. H. Omont of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

976.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London], July 12, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 352.

977.

DEAR SIR, TO JOHN RYLAND¹.

Mr. Payne² will pay you fifteen pounds towards the stone of which you have kindly undertaken the care. The Inscription is in the hands of Mr. Bagshaw, who has a right to inspect it before he admits it into his Church.

Be pleased to let the whole be done with privacy, that I may elude the vigilance of the papers.

I am going for a while into Derbyshire in hope of help from the air of the country.

I hope your journey has benefited you. The Club³ prospers; we meet by ten at a time.

God send that you and I may enjoy and improve each other.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

July 12, 1784.

To Mr. Ryland
in Muscovy Court
Tower hill.

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. vii. 381. Corrected by me from the original in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison, of Fonthill House.

For Mr. Ryland see *ante*, i. 56.

On the same day Johnson wrote the following letter:—

‘To the Reverend Mr. Bagshaw, at Bromley.

‘SIR,

Perhaps you may remember, that in the year 1753 [1752], you committed to the ground my dear wife. I now entreat your permission to lay a stone upon her; and have sent the inscription, that, if you find it proper, you may signify your allowance.

You will do me a great favour by showing the place where she lies, that the stone may protect her remains.

Mr. Ryland will wait on you for the inscription, and procure it to be engraved. You will easily believe that I shrink from this mournful office. When it is done, if I have strength remaining, I will visit Bromley once again, and pay you part of the respect to which you have a right from, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.’

Life, iv. 351.

² *Ante*, ii. 363, n. 1.

³ The Essex Head Club.

978.

TO SIR JOHN HAWKINS.

Ashbourne, [? July, 1784].

In Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, page 571, the following extract is given from a letter written by Johnson to Hawkins from Ashbourne:—

‘Poor Thrale! I thought that either her virtue or her vice would have restrained her from such a marriage. She is now become a subject for her enemies to exult over, and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget or pity.’

By ‘her virtue’ Hawkins understood he meant the love of her children, and by her vice, her pride. ‘He looked upon the desertion of children by their parents, and the withdrawing from them that protection, that mental nutriment which in their youth they are capable of receiving, the exposing them to the snares and temptations of the world, and the solicitations and deceits of the artful and designing, as most unnatural.’

979.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

Ashbourne, July 20, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 353.

980.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Ashbourne, July 21, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 366.

981.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Ashbourne, July 26, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 348, 378-9.

982.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

[Ashbourne], July 28, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 379.

983.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], July 31, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 354.

984.

TO DR. BURNEY.

[Ashbourne], August 2, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 360.

TO

985.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 5, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 354.

986.

TO JOHN HOOLE.

[Ashbourne], August 7, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 359.

987.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 12, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 354.

988.

TO — HEELY.

Ashbourne, August 12, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 371.

989.

TO JOHN HOOLE.

[Ashbourne], August 13, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 359.

990.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 14, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 354.

991.

TO THOMAS DAVIES.

[Ashbourne], August 14, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 365.

992.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 16, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 354.

993.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 19, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 355.

994.

TO GEORGE NICOL.

Ashbourne, August 19, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 365¹.

¹ See Appendix C.

995.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[Ashbourne], August 19, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 366.

996.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM.

[Ashbourne, about August 21, 1784.] Published in the *Life*, iv. 362.

997.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 21, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 355.

998.

TO FRANCESCO SASTRES¹.

DEAR SIR,

Ashbourne, August 21, 1784.

I am glad that a letter has at last reached you; what became of the two former, which were directed to *Mortimer* instead of *Margaret Street*², I have no means of knowing, nor is it worth the while to enquire; they neither enclosed bills, nor contained secrets.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 405.

Boswell, perhaps to punish Mr. Sastres for not letting him publish Johnson's letters to him, thus contemptuously mentions him:—'Dr. Johnson associated with persons the most widely different in manners, abilities, rank, and accomplishments. He was at once the companion of the brilliant Colonel Forrester of the Guards, who wrote *The Polite Philosopher*, and of the awkward and uncouth Robert Levet; of Lord Thurlow, and Mr. Sastres, the Italian master; and has dined one day with the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven, and the next with good Mrs. Gardiner, the tallow-chandler, on Snow-hill.' *Life*, iii. 21. Mr. Sastres was present when Johnson, a few days before his death,

burnt his mother's letters. 'They drew from him a flood of tears. When the paper they were written on was all consumed he saw him cast a melancholy look upon their ashes, which he took up and examined to see if a word was still legible.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 383. 'The good Mr. Hoole,' writes Miss Burney, 'and equally good Mr. Sastres attend Dr. Johnson rather as nurses than friends, for they sit whole hours by him without even speaking to him. He will not, it seems, be talked to—at least very rarely. At times, indeed he re-animates; but it is soon over, and he says of himself, "I am now like Macbeth—question enrages me."' Mme. D'Arblay's *Diary*, ii. 333.

² Mortimer Street is close to Margaret Street.

My

My health was for some time quite at a stand, if it did not rather go backwards; but for a week past it flatters me with appearances of amendment, which I dare yet hardly credit. My breath has been certainly less obstructed for eight days; and yesterday the water seemed to be disposed to a fuller flow. But I get very little sleep; and my legs do not like to carry me.

You were kind in paying my forfeits at the club¹; it cannot be expected that many should meet in the summer, however they that continue in town should keep up appearances as well as they can. I hope to be again among you.

I wish you had told me distinctly the mistakes in the French words. The French is but a secondary and subordinate part of your design; exactness, however, in all parts is necessary, though complete exactness cannot be attained; and the French are so well stocked with dictionaries, that a little attention may easily keep you safe from gross faults; and as you work on, your vigilance will be quickened, and your observation regulated; you will better know your own wants, and learn better whence they may be supplied. Let me know minutely the whole state of your negotiations. Dictionaries are like watches, the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true².

The weather here is very strange summer weather; and we are here two degrees nearer the north than you. I was I think loath to think a fire necessary in July, till I found one in the

¹ The Essex-Head Club. 'The terms are lax,' wrote Johnson, 'and the expenses light. We meet thrice a week, and he who misses forfeits twopence.' *Life*, iv. 254. Mrs. Piozzi has the following note on this passage:—'There is a story of poor dear Garrick, whose attention to his money-stuff never forsook him—relating that when his last day was drawing to an end, he begged a gentleman present to pay his club-forfeits, "and don't let them cheat you," added he, "for there cannot be above nine, and they will make

out ten."' Hayward's *Piozzi*, i. 324.

² This and Johnson's three next letters to Sastres show that his friend was hoping to publish a Dictionary in which the French was to be given. Perhaps it was to be a rival to Bottarelli's Dictionary 'of the three most fashionable languages in Europe'—English, French and Italian—published in 1777. The design seems to have come to nothing. In 1789 Sastres published *Il Mercurio Italico*, a monthly magazine, with the Italian and English in parallel columns.

servants' hall, and thought myself entitled to as much warmth as them¹.

I wish you would make it a task to yourself to write to me twice a week ; a letter is a great relief to,

Dear Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

999.

TO BENNET LANGTON.

[London], August 25, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 361.

1000.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], August 26, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 356.

1001.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], September 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 356.

1002.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[Ashbourne], September 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 366.

1003.

TO FRANCESCO SASTRES².

DEAR SIR,

Ashbourne, Sept. 2, 1784.

Your critick seems to me to be an exquisite Frenchman ; his remarks are nice ; they would at least have escaped me. I wish you better luck with your next specimen ; though if such

¹ On August 2 he wrote to Dr. Burney :—'I am now reduced to think, and am at last content to talk of the weather. Pride must have a fall.' *Life*, iv. 360. On September 7 Horace Walpole wrote :—'The summer is come at last, My Lord, dressed as fine as a birthday, though not with so many flowers on its head. In truth, the sun is an old fool, who apes the modern people of fashion

by arriving too late : the day is going to bed before he makes his appearance.' *Letters*, viii. 502. 'It is ill with me,' wrote Charles Lamb, 'when I begin to look which way the wind sets. Ten years ago, I literally did not know the point from the broad end of the vane, which it was that indicated the quarter.' Lamb's *Letters*, ed. by Ainger, ii. 147.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 407.

slips as these are to condemn a dictionary, I know not when a dictionary will be made. I cannot yet think that *gourmander* is wrong; but I have here no means of verifying my opinion.

My health, by the mercy of God, still improves; and I have hope of standing the English winter, and of seeing you, and reading Petrarch¹ at Bolt-court; but let me not flatter myself too much. I am yet weak, but stronger than I was.

I suppose the club is now almost forsaken; but we shall I hope meet again. We have lost poor Allen; a very worthy man, and to me a very kind and officious neighbour².

Of the pieces ascribed by Bembo to Virgil, the *Dirce* (ascribed I think to Valerius Cato), the *Copa* and the *Morcum* are, together with the *Culex* and *Ceiris*, in Scaliger's *Appendix ad Virgilium*. The rest I never heard the name of before.

I am highly pleased with your account of the gentleman and lady with whom you lodge; such characters have sufficient attractions to draw me towards them; you are lucky to light upon them in the casual commerce of life.

Continue, dear Sir, to write to me; and let me hear any thing or nothing, as the chance of the day may be.

I am, Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

1004.

TO DR. BURNEY.

[Ashbourne], September 4, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 360

1005.

TO WILLIAM CUMBERLAND CRUIKSHANK.

Ashbourne, September, 4, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 365.

¹ For Johnson's knowledge of Italian see *Life*, i. 115. In 1776 'he proposed to apply vigorously to the study of it.' *Ib.* iii. 90. At 3 p.m. on August 9, 1781, he recorded, 'in the summer-house at Streatham:—Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language, for my settled study.' *Ib.* iv. 134.

² Writing about Allen's death to Dr. Brocklesby on July 31 he says:— 'I thought your letter long in coming. But, you know, *nocitura petuntur*, the letter which I so much desired, tells me that I have lost one of my best and tenderest friends.' *Ib.* iv. 354. For *officious* see *ante*, ii. 357, n. 1.

1006.

TO JOHN HOOLE.

[Ashbourne], September 4, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 360.

1007.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Ashbourne, September 9, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 348, 367.

1008.

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR THURLOW.

[Ashbourne], September [9], 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 349.

1009.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], September 9, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 357.

1010.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], September 11, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 357.

1011.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Ashbourne], September 16, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 357.

1012.

TO FRANCESCO SASTRES¹.

DEAR SIR,

Ashbourne, Sept. 16, 1784.

What you have told me of your landlord and his lady at Brompton, has made them such favourites, that I am not sorry to hear how you are turned out of your lodgings, because the good is greater to them than the evil is to you.

The death of dear Mr. Allen gave me pain. When after some time of absence I visit a town, I find my friends dead; when I leave a place, I am followed with intelligence, that the friend whom I hope to meet at my return is swallowed in the grave. This is a gloomy scene; but let us learn from it to prepare for

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 409.

our own removal. Allen is gone; Sastres and Johnson are hasting after him; may we be both as well prepared!

I again wish your next specimen success. *Paymistress* can hardly be said without a preface, (it may be expressed by a word perhaps not in use, Pay mistress¹).

The club is, it seems, totally deserted; but as the forfeits go on, the house does not suffer; and all clubs I suppose are unattended in the summer. We shall I hope meet in winter, and be cheerful.

After this week, do not write to me till you hear again from me, for I know not well where I shall be; I have grown weary of the solitude of this place, and think of removal².

I am, Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

1013.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[Ashbourne], September 18, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 368.

1014.

DEAR SIR, TO JOHN RYLAND³.

You are not long without an answer. I had this day in three letters three histories of the Flying Man in the great Ballon. I am glad that we do as well as our neighbours. Lunardi, I find, forgot his barometer and therefore can [*sic*] to what height he ascended⁴.

Direct, if you please, your next letter to Lichfield, I am

¹ The passage within brackets is, I suppose, the preface which Sastres is to use. 'Johnson disapproved of parentheses,' writes Boswell, 'and I believe in all his voluminous writings not half-a-dozen of them will be found.' *Life*, iv. 190.

² Five days earlier he had written to Dr. Brocklesby:—'I have no company here, and shall naturally come home hungry for conversation.' *Ib.* iv. 357.

³ First published in *Notes and*

Queries, 5th S. vii. 381. Compared by me with the original in the possession of Mr. Frederick Barker, of 41 Gunterstone Road, West Kensington, London.

⁴ The balloon started from the Artillery Ground, Finsbury. There was a delay in providing enough 'inflammable air,' and Lunardi, fearful lest the mob should break in, went up alone. In the pocket of his companion, Mr. Biggins, was the barometer. 'We saw everything so

desirous of going thither; I live in dismal solitude, and being now a little better and therefore more at leisure for external amusements, I find the hours sometimes heavy, at least for some reason or other I wish for change.

Mr. Wyndham¹ was with me, a day here, and tried to wheedle me to Oxford, and I perhaps may take Oxford in my way home.

I am, Sir,

Your most affectionate

Sept. 18, 1784².

SAM: JOHNSON.

To Mr. Ryland, Merchant in London.

distinctly,' wrote a spectator, 'and were so much satisfied with the safety of the attempt that it was by no means that awful or solemn scene that I expected—everybody greatly interested, but cheerful and gay.' Lunardi landed three miles beyond Ware [Ware is twenty-one miles from London]. The balloon was brought back that night, 'and was lodged, amidst the acclamations of a great mob, at Biggins' house in Essex Street.' Bentham's *Works*, x. 136. Windham, calling at Burke's country-house on the 13th, had 'found them all going to London the next day on the same errand as myself, viz., to see Lunardi ascend.' Windham's *Diary*, p. 22. Horace Walpole wrote on September 30:—'I cannot fill my paper, as the newspapers do, with air-balloons; which, though ranked with the invention of navigation, appear to me as childish as the flying kites of schoolboys. . . . I was even disappointed *after* Lunardi's expedition had been prosperous; you must know I have no ideas of space: when I heard how wonderfully he had soared, I concluded he had arrived within a stone's throw of the moon—alas! he had not ascended above a mile and a half.' *Letters*, viii. 505. See *Life*, iv. 356, 358.

¹ For Windham's visit see *Life*, iv.

356, and for his record of Johnson's talk see Appendix D.

² On this day which was his birthday he composed the following prayer. The original is in the possession of Mr. Alfred Morrison, of Font-hill House:—

'Ashbourne,

September 18, 1784.

Almighty God, merciful Father, who art the giver of all good, enable me to return Thee due thanks for the continuance of my life and for the great mercies of the last year, for relief from the diseases that afflicted me, and all the comforts and alleviations by which they were mitigated; and O my gracious God make me truly thankful for the call by which thou hast awakened my conscience, and summoned me to Repentance. Let not thy call, O Lord, be forgotten or thy summons neglected, but let the residue of my life, whatever it shall be, be passed in true contrition, and diligent obedience. Let me repent of the sins of my past years and so keep thy laws for the time to come, that when it shall be thy good pleasure to call me to another state, I may find mercy in thy sight. Let thy Holy Spirit support me in the hour of death, and O Lord grant me pardon in the day of Judgement, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.'

TO

1015.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

Lichfield, September 29, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 357.

1016.

DEAR SIR,

TO JOHN RYLAND¹.

At my return hither I had the gratification of finding two of my friends, whom I left as I thought, about two months ago, quite broken with years and disease, very much recovered. It is great pleasure to a sick man to discover that sickness is not always mortal, so for age yet living to greater age. This is however, whatever Rochefoucault or Swift may say, though certainly part of the pleasure, yet not all of it². I rejoice in the welfare of those whom I love and who love me, and surely should have the same joy if I were no longer subject to mortality. As a being subject to so many wants, Man has inevitably a strong tendency to —, so I hope as a Being capable of comparing good and evil he finds something to be preferred in good, and is therefore capable of benevolence, and supposing the volition of a good and bad man as to his own interest the same, would rejoice more in the prosperity of the good.

I have for a little while past felt or imagined some declension in my health. I am still much better than I lately was, but I am a little afraid of the cold weather.

You have not lately told me of Payne, in whom I take a great

¹ First published in *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. vii. 381. The copyist seems in places to have been at fault, for the meaning is not always to be discovered.

² Swift's lines *On the Death of Dr. Swift* 'were occasioned,' he says, 'by reading the following maxim in Rochefoucault — "Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas." The following verses were perhaps in Johnson's thoughts :—

'In all distresses of our friends
We first consult our private ends ;
While Nature kindly bent to ease us
Points out some circumstance to
please us.

* * * *

Yet should some neighbour feel a
pain
Just in the parts where I complain ;
How many a message would he
send !
What hearty prayers that I should
mend !'

SWIFT'S *Works*, ed. 1803, xi. 241, 4.
interest

interest. I think he may by indulgence recover, and that indulgence, since his employers allow it him¹, he will be very culpable if he denies himself.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Lichfield, Sept. 29, 1784.

To Mr. Ryland, Merchant in London.

1017.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM.

Lichfield, October 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 362.

1018.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

[Lichfield], October 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 368.

1019.

TO MR. PERKINS.

Lichfield, October 4, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 363.

1020.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Lichfield], October 6, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 358.

1021.

DEAR SIR, TO JOHN RYLAND².

I am glad so many could yet meet at the club, where I do not yet despair of some cheerful hours. Your account of poor dear Payne makes me uneasy; if his distemper were only the true Sea Scurvey, it is incurred easily, and I believe infallibly curable. But I am afraid it is worse, not a vitiation of particular humours, but a debilitation of the whole frame, an effect not of

¹ Payne was Chief Accountant of the Bank of England. *Life*, i. 317, n. 1.

² First published in the *Literary Gazette* of December 8, 1849. The

original is in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, as I learn from Mr. John W. Jordan the Assistant-Librarian.

casualty but of time. I wish his recovery, and hope that he wishes and prays for mine.

I have for some days, to speak in the lightest and softest language, made no advances towards health. My breath is much obstructed, and my limbs are wells of water. However I have little cause to complain.

My mind, however, is calmer than in the beginning of the year, and I comfort myself with hopes of every kind, neither despairing of ease in this world, nor of happiness in another.

I shall, I think, not return to town worse than I left it, and unless I gain ground again, not much better. But God, I humbly hope, will have mercy on me.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Lichfield, Oct. 6, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To Mr. Ryland, Merchant in London.

1022.

TO DR. HEBERDEN¹.

Though I doubt not but Dr. Brocklesby would communicate to you any incident in the variation of my health which appeared either curious or important, yet I think it time to give you some account of myself.

Not long after the first great efflux of the water, I attained as much vigour of limbs and freedom of breath, that without rest or intermission, I went with Dr. Brocklesby to the top of the painters' Academy². This was the greatest degree of health that I have obtained, and this, if it could continue, were perhaps sufficient; but my breath soon failed, and my body grew weak.

At Oxford (in June) I was much distressed by shortness of breath, so much that I never attempted to scale the library³: the water gained upon me, but by the use of squills was in a great measure driven away.

In July I went to Lichfield, and performed the journey with

¹ I owe the copy of this Letter to the kindness of Mr. Godfrey Locker-Lampson, of Rowfant, Crawley, where the original is preserved. The greater part of it had been published in

Croker's *Boswell*, page 789.

² *Ante*, ii. 393.

³ The Bodleian Library, the ascent to which is one of sixty-five steps.

very little fatigue in the common vehicle, but found no help from my native air. I then removed to Ashbourn, in Derbyshire, where for some time I was oppressed very heavily by the asthma; and the dropsy had advanced so far, that I could not without great difficulty button me at my knees. Something was now to be done; I took opium as little as I could, for quiet [?] and squills, as much as I could, for help; but in my medical journal¹, August 10, I find these words, *nec opio, nec squillis quidquam sensi [?] effectum. Animus jacet.* But I plied the vinegar of squills to an hundred drops a day, and the powder to 4 grains. From the vinegar I am not sure that I ever perceived any consequence. [Here follow statements of the effect produced by these and other medicines.] I rose in the morning with my asthma perceptibly mitigated, and walked to Church that day with less struggle than on any day before.

The water about this time ran again away, so that no hydro-pical humour has been lately visible. The relaxation of my breath has not continued as it was at first. But neither do I breathe with the same *angustiae* and distress as before the remission. The summary of my state is this:

I am deprived by weakness and the asthma of the power of walking beyond a very short space.

I draw my breath with difficulty upon the least effort, but not with suffocation or pain.

The dropsy still threatens, but gives way to medicine.

The Summer has passed without giving me any strength.

My appetite is, I think, less keen than it was, but not so abated as that its decline can be observed by any one but myself².

Be pleased to think on me sometimes.

I am, Sir,

Your most obliged

and most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON.

Lichfield, Oct. 13, 1784.

¹ 'Dr. Johnson had for some time kept a journal in Latin of the state of his illness, and the remedies which he used, under the title of *Ægri Ephemeris*, which he began on the 6th of July, but continued it no longer

than the 8th of November; finding, I suppose, that it was a mournful and unavailing register.' *Life*, iv. 381.

² Dr. Taylor thought he ate too much. *Pest*, p. 425, n. 3.

1023.

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE STRAHAN¹.

In Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's Auction Catalogue of August 20, 1861, Lot 625 is a Letter of Johnson to the Rev. Mr. Strahan at Islington, one page and a half quarto, from which the following extract is given:—

'Lichfield, Oct. 19¹, 1784.

I have hitherto omitted to give you that account of myself which the kindness with which you have treated me gives you a right to expect.

I went away feeble, asthmatical, and dropsical. The asthma had submitted [?remitted] for a time, but is now very troublesome, the weakness still continues, but the dropsy has disappeared, and has since, in the summer, yielded to medicine. I hope to return with a body somewhat, however little, relieved, and with a mind less dejected.'

1024.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON.

Lichfield, October 20, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 363.

1025.

TO JOHN PARADISE.

Lichfield, October 20, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 364.

1026.

TO JOHN NICHOLS.

Lichfield, October 20, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 369.

1027.

TO FRANCESCO SASTRES².

SIR,

Lichfield, October 20, 1784.

You have abundance of naughty tricks; is this your way of writing to a poor sick friend twice a week? Post comes after post, and brings no letter from Mr. Sastres. If you know any thing, write and tell it; if you know nothing, write and say that you know nothing.

What comes of the specimen³? If the booksellers want a specimen, in which a keen critick can spy no faults, they must wait for

¹ In their Auction Catalogue of March 22, 1869, when the same Letter was a second time sold (Lot 420), the date is given as Oct. 16.

² *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 410.

³ *Ante*, ii. 415, n. 2.

another generation. Had not the Crusca ¹ faults? Did not the Academicians of France commit many faults? It is enough that a dictionary is better than others of the same kind. A perfect performance of any kind is not to be expected, and certainly not a perfect dictionary ².

Mrs. Desmoulines never writes, and I know not how things go on at home; tell me, dear Sir, what you can.

If Mr. Seward be in town tell me his direction, for I ought to write to him.

I am very weak, and have bad nights.

I am, dear Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM: JOHNSON.

1028.

TO THE REVEREND DR. TAYLOR ³.

DEAR SIR,

Coming down from a very restless night I found your letter which made me a little angry. You tell me that recovery is in

¹ The Academia della Crusca at Florence, which had sent Johnson their *Vocabulario*, just as the French Academy sent him their *Dictionnaire*. *Life*, i. 298.

² In the *Plan of an English Dictionary*, Johnson, writing of 'the word *perfection*,' says:—'Though in its philosophical and exact sense it can be of little use among human beings, it is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work, *the perfection of a language*, and, with a little more licentiousness, might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a Dictionary*.' In the Preface to the fourth edition he writes:—'He that undertakes to compile a Dictionary undertakes that, which if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform.' *Works*, v. 16, 52.

³ First published in the Catalogue

of Mr. Alfred Morrison's Autographs, volume ii, page 343. This letter is endorsed by Dr. Taylor:—'This is the last letter. My answer, which were the words of advice he gave to Mr. Thrale the day he dyed, he resented extremely from me.' The substance of the advice which Johnson gave I found in the original MS. of his *Diary* in Pembroke College Library. It is as follows:—'On Sunday 1st, the physician warned him against full meals, on Monday I pressed him to observance of his rules, but without effect, and Tuesday I was absent, but his wife pressed forbearance upon him again unsuccessfully. At night I was called to him, and found him senseless in strong convulsions.' Mrs. Piozzi had heard of Taylor's letter, for she writes:—'Dr. Johnson quarrelled with his truest friend, Dr. Taylor, for recommending to him a degree of temperance by which alone his life

my power. This indeed I should be glad to hear, if I could once believe it. But you mean to charge me with neglecting or opposing my own health. Tell me therefore what I do that hurts me, and what I neglect that would help me. Tell it as soon as you can [Here a piece of the letter is torn off.] I would do it the sooner for your desires, and I hope to do it now in no long time, but shall hardly do it here. I hope soon to be at London. Answer the first part of this letter immediately.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Lichfield, Oct. 23, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourn, Derbyshire.

1029.

TO DR. BROCKLESBY.

[Lichfield], October 25, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 358.

1030.

TO DR. BURNEY.

[Lichfield], November 1, 1784. Published in part in the *Life*, iv. 361.

1031.

TO FRANCESCO SASTRES¹.

DEAR SIR,

Lichfield, Nov. 1, 1784.

I beg you to continue the frequency of your letters; every letter is a cordial; but you must not wonder that I do not answer with exact punctuality. You may always have something to tell: you live among the various orders of mankind, and may make a letter from the exploits, sometimes of the philosopher, and sometimes of the pickpocket². You see some ballons succeed and some miscarry, and a thousand strange and a thousand foolish things. But I see nothing; I must make my letter from what I feel, and what I feel with so little delight, that I cannot love to talk of it.

could have been saved, and recommending it in his own unaltered phrase too.' *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 381.

¹ *Piozzi Letters*, ii. 412.

² The two orders sometimes met. For instance, this year at the launch-

ing of a balloon in St. George's Fields 'a more ample harvest for the pickpockets never was presented. Some noblemen and gentlemen lost their watches and many their purses.' *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1784, p. 228.

I am

I am certainly not¹ to come to town, but do not omit to write ; for I know not when I shall come, and the loss of a letter is not much.

I am, dear Sir,

Your, &c.,

SAM : JOHNSON.

1032.

TO JOHN RYLAND².

DEAR SIR,

I have just received a letter in which you tell me that you love to hear from me, and I value such a declaration too much to neglect it. To have a friend, and a friend like you, may be numbered amongst the first felicities of life ; at a time when weakness either of body or mind loses the pride and the confidence of self-sufficiency, and looks round for that help which perhaps human kindness cannot give, and which we yet are willing to expect from one another.

I am at this time very much dejected. The water gains fast upon me, but it has invaded me twice in this last half year, and has been twice expelled : it will, I hope, give way to the same remedies.

My Breath is tolerably easy, and since the remission of asthma about two months ago, have [*sic*] never been so strait and so much obstructed as it once was.

I took this day a very uncommon dose of squills, but hitherto without effect, but I will continue their use very diligently. Let me have your prayers.

I am now preparing myself for my return, and do not despair of some more monthly meetings³. To hear that dear Payne is better gives me great delight.

¹ *Not* is either a misprint or was inserted by mistake.

² First published in the Catalogue of Mr. Alfred Morrison's Autographs, volume ii, page 344.

The handwriting shows great feebleness in the writer.

³ Of the old Ivy Lane Club. *Ante*, ii. 358. On October 25 he wrote :—

'The town is my element ; there are my friends, there are my books, to which I have not yet bid farewell, and there are my amusements.' *Life*, iv. 358. 'The town is my element' is perhaps an adaptation of 'his shop is his element' in South's *Sermons*, ed. 1823, i. 20.

I saw the draught of the stone. I am afraid the date is wrong. I think it should be 52¹. We will have it rectified. You say nothing of the cash but that you have paid it. My intention was the [*sic*] Mr. Payne should have put into your hands fifteen pounds which he received for me at Midsummer². If he has not done it, I will order you the money which is in his hands.

Shall I ever be able to bear the sight of this stone? In your company I hope I shall. You will not wonder that I write no more. God bless you for Christ's sake.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Lichfield, Nov. 4, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

1033.

TO JAMES BOSWELL.

Lichfield, November 5, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 380.

1034.

TO SIR JOHN HAWKINS³.

Lichfield, November 7, 1784.

I am relapsing into the dropsy very fast, and shall make such haste to town that it will be useless to write to me; but when I come, let me have the benefit of your advice, and the consolation of your company.

1035.

TO MRS. ASTON AND MRS. GASTRELL⁴.

[Lichfield, ? November, 1784.]

Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to the Ladies at Stowhill,

¹ The gravestone on his wife. He had given the wrong date in his Letter to Mr. Bagshaw. *Ante*, ii. 410, n. 1.

² No doubt the half-year's dividend on 'the one thousand pounds, three per cent. annuities in the public funds' mentioned in Johnson's will. *Life*, iv. 402, n. 2. Mr. Payne was the Chief Accountant of the Bank of England.

³ First published in Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*, page 576. Hawkins

says that Johnson wrote to him several letters from Lichfield. Of the last of these the above is the concluding paragraph.

⁴ From the original in Pembroke College Library.

On the back of the Letter is the following note:—'Probably written in 1784 on his departure from Lichfield.'

Johnson on his way to London passed through Birmingham and Oxford, making a brief stay at both

of whom he would have taken a more formal leave, but that he was willing to spare a ceremony, which he hopes would have been no pleasure to them, and would have been painful to himself.

1036.

TO DR. BURNEY.

London, November 16, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 377.

1037.

TO EDMUND HECTOR.

London, November 17, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 378.

1038.

TO —

[? November, 1784.]

In Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's Auction Catalogue of March 14, 1866, Lot 181 is a Letter of Johnson 'ordering a parcel of books to be sent to Dr. Adams, written after his return from a visit to the doctor (the last he paid), 1784.' The last visit paid by Dr. Johnson to Dr. Adams was towards the middle of November, 1784. It is not unlikely however that this letter was written after his previous visit, and should follow the Letter of July 11, *ante*, p. 410.

1039.

SIR, TO THE REVEREND DR. VYSE¹, in Lambeth.

I am desirous to know whether Charles Scrimshaw, of places. William Hutton, the book-seller and antiquary, not three weeks later took the same road from Birmingham to London. He started at seven o'clock on the night of the first of December, and reached his journey's end at two in the afternoon of the following day. He was drawn, he says, by thirty-six horses, so that there must have been nine changes in the 120 miles. He was the only passenger, and as the cold was very severe the guard asked permission to ride inside. 'He was armed with a brace of pistols and a blunderbuss, and he dwelt largely on his own

courage; said that he could protect a coach when others could not; had saved his own when another was robbed; had often driven the rogues to a distance, now and then sent one to the shades.' Hutton's *Journey to London*, ed. 1818, p. 6. If Johnson went by the same coach to London all this talk was no doubt poured into the ears of black Frank as he sat outside.

¹ First published in Malone's *Boswell*.

Malone states:—'In conformity to the wish expressed in the preceding letter, an inquiry was made; but no

Woodsease

Woodsease (I think), in your father's neighbourhood, be now living; what is his condition and where he may be found. If you can conveniently make any inquiry about him, and can do it without delay, it will be an act of great kindness to me, he being very nearly related to me. I beg [you] to pardon this trouble.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, Nov. 29, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

1040.

TO RICHARD GREEN.

[London], December 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 393.

1041.

TO MRS. PORTER.

[London], December 2, 1784. Published in the *Life*, iv. 394.

1042.

TO JOHN NICHOLS¹.

The late learned Mr. Swinton², having one day remarked

descendants of Charles Scrimshaw or of his sisters were discovered to be living. Dr. Vyse informs me, that Dr. Johnson told him, "he was disappointed in the inquiries he had made after his relations." There is therefore no ground whatsoever for supposing that he was unmindful of them, or neglected them.'

Hawkins says that Johnson had executed a will so far as to secure an annuity for his servant, Frank Barber. 'I found,' writes Hawkins, 'that the residue of his estate would be something considerable, and I told him that he would do well to bequeath it to his relations. His answer was, "I care not what becomes of the residue."' Hawkins's *Johnson*, p. 576. See also *ib.*, p. 599.

¹ First published in Malone's *Boswell*.

In the Register of Books in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1740,

p. 360, is 'An Universal History from the earlier Account of Time to the present. In five volumes in folio. Price £10 10s. 6d.' In the Register of Books for March, 1749, p. 144, is 'Universal History in 8vo., vol. 20, and last. Price 5s. in boards.'

Gibbon, writing of his youth, says:—'My indiscriminate appetite [in reading] subsided by degrees in the historic line; and since philosophy has exploded all innate ideas and natural propensities, I must ascribe this choice to the assiduous perusal of the *Universal History* as the octavo volumes successively appeared. This unequal work, and a treatise of Hearne, the *Ductor historicus*, referred and introduced me to the Greek and Roman historians, to as many at least as were accessible to an English reader.' Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 41.

² Thomas Warton in his account that

that one man, meaning, I suppose, no man but himself, could assign all the parts of the Ancient Universal History to their proper authors, at the request of Sir Robert Chambers, or of myself, gave the account which I now transmit to you in his own hand; being willing that of so great a work the history should be known, and that each writer should receive his due proportion of praise from posterity.

I recommend to you to preserve this scrap of literary intelligence in Mr. Swinton's own hand, or to deposit it in the Museum, that the veracity of this account may never be doubted.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Dec. 6, 1784.

SAM: JOHNSON.

MR. S——N.

The History of the Carthaginians. Numidians. Mauritanians. Gætulians. Garamanthes. Melano Gætulians. Nigritae. Cyrenaica. Marmarica. Regio Syrtica. Turks, Tartars, and Moguls. Indians. Chinese.

Dissertation on the peopling of America.

independency of the Arabs¹.

The Cosmogony, and a small part of the History immediately following; by Mr. Sale².

To the birth of Abraham; chiefly by Mr. Shelvock.

of Johnson's visit to Oxford in 1754 says:—'About this time there had been an execution of two or three criminals at Oxford on a Monday. Soon afterwards, one day at dinner, I was saying that Mr. Swinton the chaplain of the gaol, and also a frequent preacher before the University, a learned man, but often thoughtless and absent, preached the condemnation-sermon on repentance, before the convicts, on the preceding day, Sunday; and that in the close he told his audience, that he should give them the remainder of what he had to say on the subject, the next Lord's Day. Upon which, one of our company, a Doctor of Divinity, and a plain matter-of-fact man, by way of

offering an apology for Mr. Swinton, gravely remarked, that he had probably preached the same sermon before the University: "Yes, Sir, (says Johnson) but the University were not to be hanged the next morning." *Life*, i. 273. John Swinton died in 1777, and is buried in the chapel of Wadham College. Chalmers's *Biog. Dict.*, xxix. 70.

¹ 'A nameless doctor (*Universal History*, vol. xx, octavo edition) has formally *demonstrated* the truth of Christianity by the independence of the Arabs.' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. 1807, ix. 202, n. 21.

² George Sale, the translator of the Koran.

History

History of the Jews, Gauls, and Spaniards ; by Mr. Psalmanazar ¹.

Xenophon's Retreat ; by the same.

History of the Persians and the Constantinopolitan Empire ; by Dr. Campbell.

History of the Romans ; by Mr. Bower.

1043.

(*Two undated Letters.*)

TO MRS. STRAHAN.

In Messrs. Sotheby and Co.'s Auction Catalogue of August 21, 1872, Lot 113 is a Letter of Johnson to Mrs. Strahan. 'Sept. 20. Postponing an invitation, "I had forgotten that I had myself invited a friend to dine with." &c.'

To —.

In the Catalogue of the same firm of May 10, 1875, Lot 104 is a Letter of Johnson, 'one page quarto, dated Nov. 29, respecting a proof sheet in which he wished to alter one word only.' It was sold for £2 8s.

Bolt Court, December 13, 1784.

In Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's Auction Catalogue of July 8, 1859, Lot 225 is 'an autograph of Johnson to a receipt for £75, being one quarter's pension, Dec. 13, 1784.' If the date is correctly given we have here in all likelihood the last words written by Johnson, for about seven o'clock in the evening of that day he died.

'He died,' writes J. T. Smith, 'in the back-room of the first floor of his house in Bolt Court, of which room I made a drawing, just before Mr. Bensley the printer pulled that part of the house down, to make way for a staircase. There is not a vestige of the original house now remaining.' *Nollekens and his Times*, ed. 1828, i. 132.

In Murray's *Johnsoniana*, ed. 1836, p. 82, is a print from a sketch by Smith of 'Dr. Johnson's sitting-room in Bolt Court.' It is possible that in his last illness his bed was moved into this room.

William Hutton, who left London for Birmingham on the night of December 12, describes how 'our bill of lading being completed we began to roll over one-hundred-and-twenty miles of snow without any noise but that of the wheels².' As the coach went silently on through a wintry world Johnson's spirit passed away.

Among the manuscripts of the British Museum are the following documents relating to the funeral :—

¹ See *Life*, iii. 443.

² W. Hutton's *Journey to London*, ed. 1818, p. 133.

I.

'Sir,—The Executors of the late Dr. Samuel Johnson request the favor of your attendance on Monday next, the 20th of December inst., at 10 o'clock in the forenoon, at the Doctor's late Dwelling-house in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, to accompany the corpse from thence to Westminster Abbey.

18th December, 1784¹.'

II.

List of those present at the Funeral² :—

Dr. Burney.	Sastres.	vi.
Sir J. Hawkins.	Dr. Wright.	
Sir J. Reynolds.	Ryland.	
Dr. Scott. i.	Malone.	
Sir J. Banks.	Dr. Farmer.	vii.
Colman.	Gen. Paoli.	
Dr. Broklesbury [Brocklesby.]	Horsley.	
Hoole. ii.	Count Zenobia.	
Nicholls. [Nichols.]	Sir Charles Bunbury.	viii.
Seward.	Cruikshank [Cruikshank].	
Frank [Francis Barber.]	Medcalf [Metcalf].	
Lowe. iii.	Dr. Butter.	ix.
Du Moulins [Desmoulins.]	Mr. Nicol.	
Burke.	Rev. S. Hoole.	
Burke, jr.	Mr. Mickle.	
Wyndham. iv. [Windham.]	C. B. [? Charles Burney.]	xi.
Holder.	Mr. Henderson.	
Cooke.	Rev. Mr. East.	
G. Strahan.	Rev. Mr. Shanville. [?]	
Rev. Mr. Butt. v.	Mr. Sharp.	xii.
Paradise.	Fifteen Gentlemen.	
Langton.	Coaches [? Fifteen Gentlemen's	
Stevens.	coaches.]	

Pall Bearers :—

Sir J. Banks.	W. Wyndham [Windham.]
Sir C. Bunbury.	Langton.
E. Burke.	G. Colman.

¹ *Nichols MSS.* The card no doubt was the one sent to John Nichols, the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. ² Add. MSS. 33,498.

‘Extract from St. James’ Chronicle the day after Johnson’s funeral’ :—

“The Procession consisted of a Hearse and six, with the corpse and twelve mourning coaches and four. It set out from Bolt Court a few minutes after twelve o’clock, followed by several gentlemen’s carriages. At one o’clock the corpse arrived at the Abbey.”

Among all the mourners there was only one man of hereditary title—Sir Charles Bunbury. ‘The great lords and great ladies who did not love to have their mouths stopped²’ neglected him to the last. Far different had been the scene at Garrick’s funeral.

‘Through weeping London’s crowded streets,
As Garrick’s funeral passed,
Contending wits and nobles strove,
Who should forsake him last³.’

But he who was followed to his last resting-place by Reynolds and Burke did not go unhonoured to his grave.

¹ Add. MSS. 33,498.

² *Life*, iv. 116.

³ Bishop George Horne’s *Essays and Thoughts*, ed. 1808, p. 283.

APPENDIX A.

(Page 179.)

To the kindness of Sir E. H. Bunbury, of Barton Hall, Bury St. Edmunds, I owe the following copy of a document in his possession endorsed by Sir H. E. Bunbury who died in 1860 :—

‘Autograph of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Draft of a Petition sketched at the desire of my Grandmother for a poor woman at Plymouth.’

TO THE KINGS most EXCELLENT MAJESTY the HUMBLE PETITION
of HUNT.

Your Majestys Petitioner begs leave with all humility to inform you that she is the Widow of Edward Hunt of your Majestys yard Plymouth who died nineteen years ago, and left her with eight young children whom she has maintained and educated.

That being now advanced in years, she has been for some time supported by her son Joseph Hunt late Captain of your Majestys ship Unicorn.

That her son was killed January the eighth in an Engagement with the Vestal a noted Frigate of superior force, which he live [*sic*] to take and then expired, leaving his Mother without any provision for her declining years.

She therefore humbly applies herself to the known goodness of your Majesty, hoping for such relief of her distress as to your Majesty shall seem proper.

APPENDIX B.

(Page 261.)

Dr. William Hunter died on March 30 of the following year. Boswell writing of that day says :—

‘I found him at home in the evening, and had the pleasure to meet with Dr. Brocklesby, whose reading, and knowledge of life, and good spirits, supply him with a never-failing source of conversation. He mentioned a respectable gentleman, who became extremely penurious near the close of his life. Johnson said there must have been a degree of madness about him. “Not at all, Sir, (said Dr. Brocklesby,) his judgement was entire.” Unluckily, however,

however, he mentioned that although he had a fortune of twenty-seven thousand pounds, he denied himself many comforts, from an apprehension that he could not afford them. "Nay, Sir, (cried Johnson,) when the judgement is so disturbed that a man cannot count, that is pretty well." *Life*, iv. 176.

The following curious manuscript note in my possession, which is, no doubt, Dr. Brocklesby's record of the conversation of this evening, shows that the respectable but penurious gentleman was the famous physician, William Hunter.

'At Dr. Johnson's, with J. Boswell, Esq., 30th March, 1783, when Dr. Hunter died.

'S. J. born in 1709, his mother in 1665 the daughter of a little Warwickshire Gent. [?] the oldest people in her childhood had seldom learnt to read*. —Dr. Hunter fell a sacrifice to his last Lecture—spent £100,000 on his Collection, nothing on Himself—advised by S. J. to leave it to Glasgow where he was born and bred—proposed to have built his Anatomy of an Elephant in the Centre of his Museum which would have fixed the place unalterably. —Opiate never destructive of S. J's. Readiness in Conversation this very circumstance I have observed—ought to beware from Hunter's Death of trifling with his Gout as that Author's [?] ended by pertinaciously giving his last Lecture in a paroxysm of that Disease.

'S. J. maintained against Boswell that knowledge should be universally taught, because no man was sorry that he had acquired knowledge, or wished to unbare [?] the Genius given Him and the Ground must be always tilled, and the Conveniencies of Life be manufactured, but it was not fair to restrict any Sett of Men to tilling the Ground and making Clothes &c.—Genius should have a fair Chance whenever it was born—it was not born Every Day —yet Solomon says "he that encreaseth Knowledge encreaseth Sorrow," and Johnson has put many Syllables of Sadness together in a like strain formerly.

* 'Only 3 or 4 public Schools before Ed. 6 and Eliz.—no free Schools royally endowed or chartered afterwards—Only 1 Bp. of Westminster and he spent the Revenues—Fakenham, Abbot of Westm^r appointed afterwards by Q. Mary preached her funeral Sermon and sat in the first parls. of Elizabeth—another preacher of Mary's funeral Sermon comforted his audience on the virtues of her Successor by observing that "a living dog was better than a dead Lion."'

Dr. Brocklesby met Lord Mansfield one night at supper. 'They interchanged some stories a little trenching on decorum. It so happened that the Doctor had to appear next morning before Lord Mansfield in the witness box; when, on the strength of last night's doings, the witness nodded with offensive familiarity to the Chief Justice as to a boon companion. His Lordship, taking no notice of his salutation, but writing down his evidence, when he came to summing it up to the jury, thus proceeded:—"The next witness is one Rocklesby or Brocklesby, Brocklesby or Rocklesby,—I am not sure which,—and first, he swears that he is a Physician." Campbell's *Lives of the Chief Justices*, ed. 1849, ii. 570.

APPENDIX C.

(Page 413.)

The following anecdotes I owe to the kindness of Mr. Falconer Madan, Fellow of Brasenose College and Sub-Librarian of the Bodleian, who found them in Dr. Philip Bliss's manuscript note book preserved in that Library ; Vol. X, MS. Eng. Misc. e. 8. p. 4.

‘Anecdotes of Samuel Johnson never published.

I.

‘When engaged on some literary research the Dr. was very anxious to procure some information relative to one of the fathers, and failing himself, commissioned his friend Nicol, the King's bookseller, to continue the enquiry, and if possible provide him with the account of which he stood in need. Meeting George Nicol shortly after in a party at dinner, where was some man of Pembroke (his own college) no great favourite with Johnson, the Dr. cried out, “Well, Sir,” to Nicol, “and what success have you had in your searches after Petrus de Maximis?” “None, Dr.,” said Nicol, “I have hunted high and low, looked in every book I can find, and can make nothing of it.” “Petrus Maximus!” said the Pembroke divine, “I never heard of him before.” “I dare say not, Sir,” said Johnson with his accustomed roughness ; “his name is not on your college buttery book.”’

Mr. G. K. Fortescue, the Superintendent of the Reading Room of the British Museum, in reply to my inquiry about Petrus de Maximis has sent me the following note :—

‘The only person I can find in the whole range of literature named Peter de Maximis (I suppose the name really is Pietro dei Massimi; a great Roman family) is one of two brothers De Maximis, who gave a home to the printers Sweynheym and Pannartz in Rome in 1467.’

Mr. Fortescue sends me an extract from Panzer's *Annales Typog.*, Norimb., 1794, ii. 413, in which are given the following verses in an edition of Strabo printed in 1469 :—

‘Aspicis illustris lector quicunque libellos
Si cupis artificum nomina nosse : lege &c.
Conrardus suueynheym : Arnoldus pannartzque magistri
Rome impresserunt talia multa simul.
Petrus cum fratre Francisco maximus ambo
Huic operi aptatam contribuere domum.’

Johnson

II.

‘Johnson was famous for an assertion that no man ever laboured for labour’s sake, but that all, whatever were their pursuits, followed them from motives of interest, however they might disguise the real end from themselves or others. Sir Joshua Reynolds knowing that this was a favourite subject, and much wishing to draw the Dr. out before a large party of ladies, commenced his address to him with:—“Well, Dr., I have been the whole day engaged on a picture which has delighted me; I never laboured so long with so great and unmingled pleasure.” “I beg your pardon, Sir,” retorted Johnson; “your pleasure was not derived from your labour, but from the reward you expect to derive from it. It was your interest made you pleased with your occupation,”—and a great deal more to the same effect, completely falling into Sir Joshua’s scheme, and amusing the whole company with his declamation. At last turning to the ladies he expressed himself fearful they must have been tired by so long a discourse on so dry a subject, but added he, “Ladies, I can at once illustrate all I have been saying to Sir Joshua, and render my meaning perfectly intelligible to you, by remarking that when Leander swam the Hellespont he did not do so from a love of swimming.”’

For labouring for labour’s sake, see the *Life*, ii. 98; iii. 19; iv. 219. South had said:—‘Men do not use to run, only that they may run, but that they may obtain; labour itself being certainly one of the worst rewards of a man’s pains.’—SOUTH’S *Sermons*, ed. 1823, iii. 137. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, part iv. sect. 6, maintains that ‘Providence has so ordered it that a state of rest and inaction, however it may flatter our indolence, should be productive of many inconveniencies; that it should generate such disorders as may force us to have recourse to some labour, as a thing absolutely requisite to make us pass our lives with tolerable satisfaction.’ In the next section he describes ‘common labour’ as ‘a mode of pain.’

APPENDIX D.

(Page 420.)

From the *Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham* (p. 17) I have selected the following notes among those which he made of Dr. Johnson’s conversation at Ashbourne at the end of August 1784.

The principle of all amusements is to beguile time and fill the interval between active thought and perfect vacuity.

The

The source of every thing, in or out of nature, that can serve the purpose of poetry, is to be found in Homer;—every species of distress, every modification of heroic character, battles, storms, ghosts, incantations, &c. Dr. Johnson said he had never read through the *Odyssey* completely in the original.

Anecdote of his first declamation at College; that having neglected to write it till the morning of his being to repeat it, and having only one copy, he got part of it by heart, while he was walking into the Hall, and the rest he supplied as well as he could extempore.

Description of himself as very idle and neglectful of his studies.

His opinion, that I could not name above five of my college acquaintances who read Latin with sufficient ease to make it pleasurable; the difficulty of the language overpowers the desire to read the author; that he read Latin with as much ease when he went to college as at present. Attention to the language overpowers the regard to the matter; rather not know the contents than dig them out of Latin.

That a year or two elapsed between his quitting school and going to College.

Commended Ovid's description of the death of Hercules—doubted whether Virgil would not have loaded the description with too many fine words; that Virgil would sometimes *dare verba*.

Opinion that there were three ways in which writing may be unnatural; by being bombastic and above nature, affected and beside it, fringing every event with ornaments which nature did not afford, or weak and below nature. That neither of the first would please long. That the third might indeed please a good while, or at least many; because imbecility, and consequently a love of imbecility, might be found in many.

Baretti had told him of some Italian author, who said that a good work must be that with which the vulgar were pleased, and of which the learned could tell why it pleased—that it must be able to employ the learned, and detain the idle. Chevy Chase pleased the vulgar, but did not satisfy the learned; it did not fill a mind capable of thinking strongly. The merit of Shakspeare was such as the ignorant could take in, and the learned add nothing to.

Τερπόμενός τε νόον ὁ πλείονα εἰδώς¹—the offer of the Syren to Ulysses. Any man will preserve his respect who can promise this to another; applied to a college tutor.

Vast change of the Latin language from the time of Lucretius to Virgil; greater than known in any other, even the French.

Suspicion that the old grammarians have given us from an analogy more modifications of tenses than were ever used. Remember but one instance of second future, viz. *εὐρῶ* in Josephus; and three of the optative, if I recollect, of the preterite and middle, one of them in Hesiod.

Great advantage of a University, that a person lives in a place where his reputation depends on his learning.

Argument about that feel which persons on great heights suppose themselves to have of a wish to throw themselves down.

¹ Ἄλλ' ὅγε τερπόμενος νείτῃ καὶ πλείονα εἰδώς.—*Odyssey*, XII. 188.

The idea of *delitescence* one of those that please the mind in a hilly country. *Torpescence*, much of the faculties of the mind lost in them.

Qui stupet in *statuis*¹, applied to Joseph Warton's admiration of fine passages. His taste is amazement².

The pretensions of the English to the reputation of writing Latin founded not so much on the specimens in that way which they have produced, as on the quantity of talent diffused through the country.

Erasmus appears to be totally ignorant of science and natural knowledge. But one Italian writer is mentioned in Erasmus.

Opinion about the effect of turnpike roads. Every place communicating with every other. Before, there were cheap places and dear places. Now all refuges destroyed for elegant or genteel poverty. Want of such a last hope to support men in their struggle through life, however seldom it might be resorted to. Disunion of families by furnishing a market to each man's abilities, and destroying the dependence of one man on another.

September 1st.—Left Ashbourne at half-past one, having gone with Dr. Johnson, in the morning, to prayers. Regretted, upon reflection, that I had not staid another day.

¹ 'Qui stupet in titulis et imaginibus.'

'And rapt, with awe-struck admiration gaze,

When the long race its images displays.' FRANCIS. HOR. *Sat.* vi. 17.

Mr. Croker prints '*Qui stupet*, in *Statius*.'

² In the text *amusement*. I have followed Mr. Croker's reading.

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